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# Dancing the Curriculum

A research report on the  
Dance and Learning Inspired (DaLI) Project



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## Confidentiality

In order to protect the identity of the children involved their names have been removed and in places substituted with pseudonyms. Occasionally certain quotations used in this report have been amended to avoid identification of individuals through distinctive speech patterns. However this has not affected the meaning of the quote.

*'It's been a great experience, it's not always been enjoyable, it's not always been easy but it's like nothing I've done before or probably will ever do again.'*

Teacher, Bullion Lane Primary School

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## INTRODUCTION

*'In school my life has been different because I have been sitting on the dance floor instead of sitting on tables and chairs but me and my class are very lucky, we have dance people that come in and teach us dance. It is really fun.'* Pupil's diary.

This report describes a three month creative arts project which aimed to deliver the whole curriculum to a Year 3 class in a primary school using movement and dance. For one term (Autumn 2009) the desks and chairs were removed from the class and replaced with a dance floor and cushions. Three creative practitioner residencies took place throughout the term in which artists worked with the class teachers focussing on 'non-sedentary' methods of teaching and learning.

The school in question, Bullion Lane Primary School in Chester-le-Street, County Durham, had been involved in a previous arts programme called 'Cultural Hubs' initiated by The Forge, a participatory arts organisation based in Stanley. This two year programme involved an exploration of dance in eight schools in the county and was in collaboration with Dance City in Newcastle, a cultural organisation serving the region. From that process a second programme called 'Metamorphosis' was developed to explore specific inquiries coming from the first programme.

Initial discussions were held between the head of Bullion Lane, Marion Walker and (then) creative director of Dance City, Penny Rae, and director of The Forge, Tony Harrington about how the school could meet learning objectives through movement in a more integrated and radical way, particularly meeting the needs of children who have different learning styles. This intervention was aimed at Year 3 children to help them cope with the transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 which many children find challenging.

During the Summer Term of 2009 a brief was drawn up for a project entitled 'Dance and Learning Inspired' (DaLI). The project had the aims of *'using movement as a basis for curriculum understanding'* to promote *'non-sedentary learning'* and to instil *'a movement learning culture in the school.'* The project would also explore the *'mental well-being and physical health benefits'* of the approach. Therefore the project was focussed on exploring the relationship between three concepts: movement, learning, and wellbeing. The project gained funding predominantly through the Arts Council North East via the Metamorphosis Fund (administered by The Forge Arts and Education Agency in Durham) and Dance City.

The project was viewed as radical and experimental. It was seen as a pilot for a much larger project with an academic research element. Penny Rae approached The Centre for Medical Humanities at Durham University to be the academic partner on this project and funding was gained through the Wolfson Research Institute at Durham to carry out a scoping study to inform research questions and methodology for this larger application. The aims of the scoping study included:

- To understand and describe the activities involved in non-sedentary learning forms

- To identify issues arising in implementation of non-sedentary learning forms in the classroom
- To identify issues and debates from the standpoint of different stakeholders involved, that is children, parents, and teaching staff.
- To explore the methodological issues and challenges in researching movement
- To frame the activities within wider theoretical and methodological literatures
- To develop a larger research project in collaboration with partners.

A social scientist was employed to be an embedded researcher on the project to collect qualitative data to inform the scoping study. This report contains a description of the findings for the different stakeholders.



## BEGINNINGS

In the summer term 2009, after the brief and funding for the DaLI project had been agreed, a letter was sent to all parents of the pupils outlining the project. In addition parents were also invited to an open evening to meet the teachers and gain further information. In the brief of the project it was envisaged that there would be regular 'sharings' where parents would come in and see what the children were doing and even take part.

In order to prepare for the Autumn term the first residency, Bare Toed Dance Company, came into the school for two days to meet the teachers and make preparations for the project before the summer break. One of the key aims of DaLI was to embed a culture of movement based learning in the whole school and so Bare Toed ran a session for the whole staff team. They used the hall to demonstrate some of their resources: suspended fabric cocoons, trapeze and a large circle of lycra (or the stretchy orange doughnut as it came to be called) which the whole class could get inside and play games. The staff had fun having a go and then talked about how to work with Bare Toed's approach to deliver learning objectives. This preparation was seen very positively in terms of building relationships with the practitioners beforehand and working out how to use movement to deliver the curriculum.

Unfortunately, the key people who were very keen to be involved in the project all ended up having to step out. Penny Rae left her post at Dance City, the head of the school had to have a major operation and was absent for most of the Autumn term and the class teacher then to cover as head for the school and ended up not being able to be involved in the delivery of the project. This meant that for a time there was uncertainty about whether the project would go ahead and who would be involved. The consequence of this was that some of the planning was fairly last minute and this created negative impacts which will be discussed. In the end Claire Frawley of Dance City Creative Partnerships was asked to take overall operational responsibility for the project and a temporary part-time co-ordinator was employed to carry out day to day management of the project.

Three different residencies were planned for the project, each being approximately of three and a half weeks duration. In addition each of the residencies were asked to do a further two days towards the end of the project with a final day when all the creative practitioners (CPs) were together with the children for a celebratory farewell. In addition a day at Dance City was arranged for the children to see a performance of 'The Forest' a dance production for under sevens by the company Fevered Sleep. This was made into a full day with the CPs doing other activities with the children at Dance City.

Some initial reactions to the project:

*'Well, I laughed 'cos I thought what dance got to do with schoolwork? What has twirling about and being trees got to do with learning?'* Parent

*'I was a bit apprehensive at first, I didn't understand the reason for it.'* Parent

*'I thought it was a good idea, it's good for kids to express themselves and exercise and to have more fun at school'* Parent

*'Initially I thought it was very different, very arty farty new age for me but possibly great for more academically challenged children, maybe for one or two days but not the whole term.'* Parent

*'Don't know, when I found out it was weird, a bit different but (I was) excited.'* Pupil

*'I thought 'dancing is for girls' and I didn't want to (do it), but it's OK cos it's not really dancing.'* Pupil

*'It was exciting'* Pupil

*'At first I was a bit sceptical, thinking how do you teach maths... you can't do this but after talking to the first residency that came in I felt a lot more comfortable. We talked about our learning objectives and they came up with ideas about how to teach it, then I was all for it, it was a pilot so I thought let's see what it does.'* Teacher

*'(At first) I said, 'No thanks.' When I realised it was actually going to happen then I became more positive and thought let's give it a go. I wouldn't have wanted the children to miss out...I was not sceptical about the approach itself, I think everything should be tried. It was a more personal thing for me I didn't feel confident as a teacher, because I'm not the most creative person.'* Teacher

*'I laughed!'* Teacher

*'I found this whole project exciting, I felt I would really like to get my teeth into this'* Creative practitioner

*'At first I thought it was just another CP project but then after I'd been to the school and saw, I thought it was quite special...such a massive step for teachers and the school to take...lessening the structure that they might usually have, it scared me as well, there's always that worry about if it will be effective.'* Creative practitioner

*'Initially we felt very clear about the project and we were drawn to the fact that it was about learning...we were drawn by the mention of non sedentary practices and movement which seemed a lot like how we work anyway which we think of as being creative about how children are invited and engaged in their own learning. So children are given much more of a say in their learning.'* Creative practitioner

## BACKGROUND

### The School

Bullion Lane is a community primary school maintained by the local authority situated within an extensive area of social housing in Chester-le-Street, County Durham. Its current intake is 326 pupils of which almost 30% have been identified as having some special needs requirement.<sup>1</sup> In terms of national assessment at Key Stage 2 the school has a lower than national average educational attainment.<sup>2</sup> According to the extended schools professionals who work with the school the catchment is *'one of the worst in the area'* with a particular problem with drugs on the nearby estate being traded openly on the streets. Due to the severe levels of deprivation they feel that *'problems which would not be tolerated at other schools are just the norm at Bullion Lane.'* Teachers and related professionals report that the school has a poor reputation locally with more academically aspirational parents who move their children after the nursery stage to other primary schools nearby. The latest Ofsted Report for the School states:

*'This is a larger than average primary school, with nursery provision, in an area of significant social deprivation. Nearly three times the national average of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is within the highest category nationally. Almost all pupils are from White British families and there are no pupils whose home language is not English.'*<sup>3</sup>

Although facing substantial challenges the school has made considerable recent improvements in attendance and attainment and both staff and Ofsted inspectors attributed this largely to the energies and vision of the head. There is a huge commitment within the school to extending the curriculum through arts and sports activities and the school received an 'outstanding' grade for *'their work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being.'* Similarly the extended schools professionals felt that *'the school is incredibly flexible and open to working with us.'* Whilst the DaLI project was happening, there were also other initiatives going on in school including a football coaching programme encouraging parents and children to learn together. Two priority areas for improvement identified in the report were to challenge the able pupils more and to improve writing skills overall.

The school building itself was constructed in the 1930s and is designed incorporating two inner garden courtyards around which the classrooms are situated, making the building airy and light. There is a library, a main hall which also functions as a dining room and an IT suite. The grounds are large and incorporate two concrete yards, a playing field, netted playing courts, an extensive growing area which houses a thriving kitchen garden project and a play area made from old tyres.

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<sup>1</sup> Pupils with SEN with a statement or supported at School Action Plus 29.7%

<sup>2</sup> See DCSF Bullion Lane achievement and attainment tables : [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/cgi-bin/performance/tables/school\\_09.pl?No=8402745&Mode=Z&Type=SC&Phase=p&Year=09&Begin=s&Base=p&Num=840](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/cgi-bin/performance/tables/school_09.pl?No=8402745&Mode=Z&Type=SC&Phase=p&Year=09&Begin=s&Base=p&Num=840)

<sup>3</sup> Taken from Ofsted Report 2008

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu\\_reports/download/\(id\)/95757/\(as\)/114209\\_311515.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/95757/(as)/114209_311515.pdf)

## The Teachers

Four teachers were involved in this project.

Edwin was an experienced teacher but he had not taught this class before so did not know their skills and abilities in detail. However, he had experience of some of them from his role in wider school activities and disciplinary systems. This year he had made the life decision after 20 years of teaching in Bullion Lane to reduce his working hours to part time and so worked Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Sarah was a newly qualified teacher who had done part of her teacher training in the school the year before with the class when they were in Year 2. She therefore had worked with most of the children already. She had been brought in temporarily for the term to cover while another teacher, Margaret, was acting head in the absence of the head. She was job sharing with Edwin and worked Mondays and Tuesdays with Year 3. She also attended a planning meeting every Friday afternoon where the two teachers met with the CPs to review the past week and plan for the next one.

Susan was a Higher Level Teaching Assistant who had worked in the school for many years and knew the children well. She also lived in the area and knew many of the children's families and backgrounds. Due to her level of experience she was able to teach the children on her own as well as providing support for the teachers. She was often called to cover other classes as needed and because she had to cover the class during the meeting on Fridays sometimes she and the rest of the team felt this excluded her from the full process of the project.

Margaret would have been the other class teacher (rather than Sarah) but for the term she was acting head due to the head being off on extended sick leave. She was disappointed not to have been involved more fully in the class but she oversaw the project from the school side and met with the DaLI co-ordinator to arrange practicalities for the project like the trip to Dance City.

## The Class

There were 28 children in the class aged seven, 18 girls and 10 boys. The majority had all been in the same class the previous year so they knew each other well as a group. However, six of the children had been in another class of mixed Year 1/Year 2. This class had had the same teacher for two years. Therefore for them the change to a new peer group and new teachers as well as a jump in level was a particular challenge. Year 3 is also the transition period from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 and therefore proves a stressful time for some. That is the reason the school wanted the project to be placed at the transition stage.

## Evaluation, Research and Documentation

There was a great deal of interest in this project and as such it was intensively and extensively evaluated and documented. Three people were attached to the project for this purpose: a co-ordinator/evaluator and a photographer (both employed through the project funds) and a researcher from Durham University (employed through Wolfson Institute funds). These individuals spent extended periods in the school building relationships, observing and recording what was happening. Their presence was significant to the children, teachers and artists in various ways and impacted on the project both positively and negatively. As one of the artists commented these individuals did not just observe the project but were '*part of the delivery*'. This section introduces those people and impacts will be discussed later.

The co-ordinator/evaluator, Laini, had a background in social science research, dance and yoga. She was employed temporarily to co-ordinate and evaluate the project. She visited the school regularly and observed lessons and activities, she conducted group discussions with small groups of children and interviewed the teachers and artists. Her aim was a specific evaluation of how well people felt that the project had met its aims and their expectations. She also had to co-ordinate the residencies and act as a communicator between the artists and the school.

The photographer, Oran, was employed to document the project. He had extensive experience of photographing and filming arts projects including working in schools. He had been asked to document a process as opposed to capturing 'nice artistic' shots of the project. Oran also interviewed the children while filming them, asking them what they felt about the project.

The researcher, Karen, was a social scientist from the Centre for Medical Humanities, Durham University. She was attached to the project to observe classroom activities, interview teachers and artists, talk to children and parents and to develop research questions for a larger project. Typically she would spend two days in school per week and participated in activities whilst doing unstructured observation.

In addition, two of the residencies documented the children's responses. Dry Water gave all the children a diary and encouraged them to record their engagement in the project. They also filmed many of the sessions and asked for regular feedback from the children during circle activities which they recorded in various ways. Garner used film to record the children doing creative movement. There were also occasional visits by TV, newspapers and an external film making company who were making a film about the whole school. At times there were many people in the classroom observing or recording and this sometimes created tension. There was also a sense in which people felt they were 'over consulted' and the children became so used to being asked about their experiences that their responses became quite 'rehearsed' towards the end of the project.

## THE DELIVERY OF THE PROJECT

### Residency 1 - Bare Toed Dance Company

This company are focussed around dance, play and creative movement. They specialise in dance for the under fives and are based at Dance City. As well as workshop and training activities they have a strong performance element to their work, particularly in aerial dance. Their resources include trapeze and cocoons (suspended fabric pouches which people can climb inside). One of the company used to be a primary school teacher who then trained in dance therapy, another is trained in Five Rhythms dance. One of the company was in school all week except Friday morning. Usually they would work separately but occasionally they would work together, when using the trapeze and cocoons in the hall. Two other members of the company delivered occasional sessions including work centred around creating music and recording the children's voices.

Their primary approach is to encourage creativity, curiosity and confidence using the excitement of movement to engage the children. A core feature of the way they relate to children is through a gentle playfulness centred around body awareness and key to this is valuing and respecting the individual:

*'Being seen, being valued, being heard, having choices respected, in terms of education work I think children know lots about letting their creative ideas flow, letting their ideas be embodied and visible and a lot of what we are doing is creating times and spaces to really value what they are doing.'* CP

*'It's about freeing up the creativity of the children and getting them to realise that every movement they make is dance, if dance is expressive movement then walking from one side of the room to the other is unique to each individual they way that they do it and expresses something about themselves. So it's really the opportunities for recognising everyday movement and extending that, freeing them up to explore that a little bit more.'* CP

In terms of understanding the aims of the project and how their approach could fit in with this there was an appreciation of the inquiry and openness of the investigation:

*'The way it was presented it was left quite open so with the early meetings with the teachers we, I guess we would use movement rather than dance anyway, we were using the word movement, it's about embodied learning, understanding things through your body and using movement to communicate and explore a particular topic.'*

*'For me the bit I really picked up on and really liked was the curious investigation part of it, can that attention to movement and dance enhance and support learning, the deep, deep layers of learning and wellbeing and that was something I really appreciated that it stayed that vague, that curious investigation.'*

However due to the key people stepping out as discussed earlier the CPs felt it *'wobbled the process'* and so the very first day of the project the CP arrived at school to greet a teacher she had never met before and they had very little time to prepare before the lesson started.

A real strength of this residency was the way the company initially involved the whole school through a performance and workshop during the first week, encouraging everyone to play with the resources. They also involved parents who came in to have fun with their children and talk about the project. This generated a lot of excitement in the children which they continued to refer to all through the project. The fact that parents were involved seemed particularly meaningful.

*'I liked the beginning of the project when we started off very much as dancers, as aerialists offering them the show and then inviting them to step in and have a go, they were excited about what we did, they were interested and it was a really good foundation for the project... they were really motivated and that echoed in the relationship afterwards.'*

Their work very much focussed on allowing the children space and time to 'be in their bodies' to feel and notice. This residency looked for ways to be more aware of movement in everyday routines of the school as well as creating movement responses to curriculum concepts. For example they used registration as a way to gradually encourage movement and confidence, so children would call out their names in a circle and perform an action. This was harder work for the teachers and took longer as they would then have to find names on the register rather than just read them in order. However, it was noticeable that after a few sessions the children became less reticent and their movements became more confident and expressive. The dancers encouraged the children to explore their physicality in everyday routines:

*'Reading time, the fact we are on the floor and really taking some time to get comfortable, that might mean continuing to fiddle while reading but lets be really comfortable in ourselves so we can do this. We introduced putting two hands up instead of one and things like when putting your hand up imagine if that feeling went right throughout your body, then we could go with that natural flow that children have, children at that age can't say jump without having a jump or yawn without having a yawn at that age it's still very connected so hopefully we can create layers and layers of opportunities to enable that to happen.'* CP

In terms of the movement being integrated into delivery of the curriculum there was a process of joint investigation between teachers and CPs. This was hard work for both parties with neither being sure at times who was leading the session. The teachers would tend to deliver a lesson and invite the CP to do some movement based activity to reinforce it. Sometimes this worked well and sometimes the CPs found it very challenging. Some parts of the curriculum lent themselves very obviously to movement and the work with cocoons like symmetry, science (learning about shadows) and literacy. Using movement scenarios to increase vocabulary and



expression was fairly successful. Initially the CPs and teachers felt that subjects like maths were trickier to apply to movement. In addition, CPs were outside their comfort zone with the maths concepts and language used by teachers (all the residencies found this). However, they came up with some innovative movement games around maths concepts. The CPs felt at the end of the project that maths was one area of the curriculum which had been successfully integrated with movement and had clearly enhanced the engagement of the children with the subject:

*'The idea of it was harder than actually doing it. The tasks are very clear in maths with right and wrong answers and so it was easier to come up with movement based tasks....when we did maths with bodies the shift in engagement of the children was massive'.*

An example of this was a game devised by the CPs to teach rounding up numbers to the next multiple of ten. The teacher delivered a whiteboard lesson on this and then the children went into the yard with the CP to reinforce this in a game. She positioned four pairs of children at each corner holding small whiteboards with 20, 30, 40 and 50 written on them. Their task was to jog around the perimeter of the yard and when she said 'stop' to jog back to their corner. So all the 20s would be in one corner and all the 30s would be in another etc. The rest of the children were positioned in the middle and each given a number to round up to the nearest multiple of ten. They had to start spinning round and at the 'stop' request run to the corner which was the correct number. The children enjoyed this activity and were very active. Some children got it straight away, others took a few times. Many of the children were checking each others' numbers and telling them where to go if they were wrong. There was a lot of peer teaching happening. After a few goes all the children arrived first time at their correct number.

*Observation: Listening Skills*

*During circle time the children were learning about listening skills. The CP talked to the group about how you don't just listen with your ears but with your whole body and talked about attention. Then she started to move around within the circle and came very close to the children and looked at them and then moved away again turning and rolling on the floor in a very fluid way. The children really enjoyed this, the interaction made them giggle and they were very enlivened by watching her movements. Then she stood in the middle of the circle and asked for a volunteer to help her show how you listen with your whole body. She chose a boy and asked him to watch carefully and mirror her movements. He concentrated very hard and the class was very quiet watching them. Then she asked him to take over and she would copy him, the movements became more stilted, perhaps self conscious. Then she withdrew and asked for another child to partner the boy, first one copying the other and then at some point changing over. Sometimes the children weren't sure who was copying who and they had to really visually communicate with each other. The CP asked one more person to try this then it was time to go home. The children were very engaged and focused during this exercise, both those taking part and those watching.*



The staff meetings during this residency were long and challenging. There was a lot to cover and many questions and anxieties. An interesting issue which was raised early on was the teachers' concern with the lack of recording i.e. the children weren't writing as much as they would in a normal classroom. The teachers felt that they needed to see evidence that the children 'got' concepts by the way they recorded. The CPs felt that for issues like symmetry it was clear to see who 'got it' and who didn't by the way they responded to tasks. CPs felt that photographs of the children in symmetrical positions could maybe suffice as evidence of met learning objectives and that some creativity and relaxation around evidence and recording could happen. Both teachers found that they were self conscious in front of CPs about their language and behaviour towards the children '*I know I shout too much*' or '*I'm really aware not to say low, middle and high ability*'. Both CPs felt that they would like a space in the day just to do movement for movement's sake without the constraints of the curriculum.

#### CP responses

*'We stepped into the teachers very compartmentalised approach, and I think if we had had some time at the beginning to really look at planning then it could have looked very different, if I did it again I would want to look at the whole curriculum between Sept and Dec and (look at) how can we cover that. It would have been nice to have done that as a team.'*

*'it felt like there was a lot to cover in the meetings and the co-teaching issues and there were two dancers and two teachers and the two teachers needed that time to communicate with each other, the practicalities it didn't feel that there was anyone with a complete overview of what had happened in that week, that was tricky.'*

*'We came in right at the start and had to deal with all the anxieties of the teachers and it didn't feel like we had free reign to do what we wanted and I guess there's a bit of disappointment in that.'*

*'What I felt for those kids after three weeks of working with them, I felt love for them and that's something we don't articulate very well in a professional context but I felt very touched by them...because it was so concentrated in time and also the nature of the project, we were involved in their whole day.'*

#### Teachers responses

*'We didn't know what to expect and it felt a little bit contrived at times trying to fit dance into things, like punctuation, how on earth can you do that, because it's so dry in a way, but we did do it and we had fun but I wouldn't say they learnt a lot from it. I think the cocoons and the trapeze worked to a certain extent but I don't think you can use them for your learning throughout the whole teaching day really. They had some good ideas in terms of how to put things in a movement perspective and had primary school experience so could see it from a teachers perspective. Possibly at times they were a bit frustrated at how little movement was incorporated.'*

*'I think we've all got on together really well. I felt they were frustrated they weren't doing what they wanted to do. From the first day in there seemed to be a confusion about who was leading...it was better when they came back for the two days at the end, it was a lot more relaxed.'*

*'There was never a blueprint for this...I think there are layers and layers to what is happening here and we are all working on different levels. You've got to be comfortable with what you are doing and we are not dancers. We're still finding our way.'*

#### Pupils' responses

*'I liked it when Rachel and Lynn were in and we did the cocoons. You just got to spin around and get dizzy!'*

*'I liked the trapeze because when Rachel and Lynn showed us it, when our parents came in, I felt really happy.'*

*'I had fun when my brother and family were supporting me'.*

*'I liked it when we did the big stretchy orange doughnut.'*

*'With Rachel and Lynn we would do loads of dancing and movement. On the day they went the class felt sad.'*

*'Karate punctuation helped me with my punctuation cos I enjoy doing the karate'*

#### Summary

This residency successfully generated initial excitement and enthusiasm for the project and involved other staff and parents. Due to operational difficulties the start of the project was not as well planned as it could have been and CPs and teachers were very much finding their way, unsure regarding the team teaching aspect and all found this a strain and quite exhausting. CPs were very conscious of not wanting to 'step on the teacher's toes' or 'take over' and as such creative input tended to be fairly reactive and followed the compartmentalised approach of the existing teaching day. CPs expressed frustration that this was the case and that there hadn't been enough of a relationship built earlier. Likewise teachers felt frustrated that they were unsure who was leading. Due to the two CPs and two teachers all being in on different days there was need for increased communication and co-ordination between them.

CPs in this residency challenged some school procedures regarding recording and evidence that the children had understood concepts and regarding the 'housepoints' and 'growlies' system of reward and punishment of children (which they chose not to participate in). Children had a lot of fun in this residency and it provided some of

the highlights of the whole project for them. Lots of pictures were drawn of the cocoons and trapeze and these became symbolic of this residency for the children. For the children, being able to see their parents and teachers take part in the activities was important. For some of the more reticent children the gentle approach enabled individual pupils to take time and build confidence in their bodies and movement.

In terms of learning outcomes there was a mismatch in the way that teachers and CPs viewed this residency. Teachers tended to feel that the residency increased the general engagement of children and improved their attitude to learning and their enjoyment of school. However, they were uncertain as to the merits of the approach in delivering specific and consistent learning objectives. The CPs felt that the project was very constrained by a particular view of what learning meant and also by traditional recording and assessment procedures which are largely spoken and written. They also felt that there was 'conflicting evidence from the children' who showed that they had learnt concepts like rounding up numbers and symmetry by the way they responded with body movement. They felt that there needed to be much more dialogue about the role of developmental movement in learning and the way this is recorded.

## Residency 2 – Dry Water Experimental Arts

This company describe their approach as child centred with a large emphasis on co-construction of learning. They encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and spend time listening, responding and documenting the process with the children using diaries and film. They use exploratory play and art based provocations to engage with pupils. A large focus for them is on contextualising the learning process so that it is meaningful and relevant to the child. The company incorporate a drama/dance trained artist and a visual artist but stress that they work across art forms including movement, music, sculpture, painting, textile and outdoor art and draw on a wide array of material resources, including natural materials, theatrical and historical costume and artefacts and kites. They have extensive experience delivering curriculum based projects in schools.

*'We've worked like this for a long time, we often clear a room, it's that complete engagement with a provocation, it might be a movement provocation or a sound provocation and it's how the children engage with that provocation.'*

*'We want to engage children in their own learning, it's that learning to learn, that curiosity and we use that word curiosity a lot. It's about engaging the children and getting them to ask questions, getting them to think and reflect.'*

In the context of this project Dry Water felt easier with the concept of 'non-sedentary' rather than 'dance':

*'We were drawn to the word 'non-sedentary' because the way that we work across art forms means we don't compartmentalise...that is how we approach movement. Dance conjures up so many different images for different people and non-sedentary is a better way to describe it which covers dance...it's bigger than dance.'* CP

*'Children instinctively like to be active, not necessarily dancing and expressing in that sort of performative way but they like to be doing, especially that age group, they like to move it's natural to them, whether that's lying on the floor and rolling around or jumping up like little rockets it's all kind of implicitly there. I was always anxious about the dance bit'* CP

For them 'non-sedentary' meant an approach to learning that was engaged, active and fluid and which could incorporate physical movement where appropriate. This broad interpretation of what the project was about enabled them to be much freer in terms of how they responded creatively to the challenges of the curriculum. In addition, Dry Water had the opportunity to go in and observe what the previous residency were doing and talk to Bare Toed. This gave them an idea of what some of the issues were and they were able to talk this through with the teachers to ensure that they could work in the way they wanted. Dry Water have a distinct approach and they also always worked together which meant leadership and communication was much clearer in this residency.

*Observation: Stones and symmetry*

*In silence, the CP took out a basket of pebbles and placed two on the floor in front of her. She put the basket in front of the child next to her and motioned for her to do the same. The child knew straight away she had to take two pebbles and put them down in front of her and pass the basket on. There was some gentle music playing while all children took two pebbles and this took some time. No child touched or fiddled with the pebbles at all while they were waiting. There was no speaking. There was an air of expectation. Then the CP stood up slowly, picked up her pebbles and placed them in the centre of the circle and sat down. She looked at the child next to her and the child did the same. So in turn each child put their stones in the middle. Two parallel lines of stones started to form. When the other CP's turn came she placed her pebbles to break up this pattern, then the children after her put their stones in a more random position. Then the first CP put a strip of thin white tape over the stones, it had the word 'symmetry' written on it. They asked the children to take turns again and move two stones (any stones) to make a symmetrical pattern using the line of symmetry. Some children obviously understood clearly and others seemed very unsure but everyone attempted to move two stones. Some gentle music played in the background and the children seemed relaxed and curious as the stone pattern was changing and emerging. There was not time to do another round before the break so the CP asked the children to think about where the stones were symmetrical and she asked several children to come and point and tell why they thought it was symmetrical there.*

In this residency there was much more focus on cross curricular learning which forced the compartmentalised approach of the day to be relaxed somewhat. In general the CPs slowed down the pace of the teaching day and created opportunities and space for those who didn't get it to take time to get it. The children who tended to put their hands up straight away were told to put them back down and take time to think through things first, *'give your head a little rub and your brain a little jiggle otherwise answers disappear from the tips of your fingers when you are asked.'* They gave the children permission to be puzzled or to find it hard by validating that experience in various ways. They gave lots of time for thinking and re-engaged the disengaged with gentle humour like *'are you having a little holiday?'*

The cross curriculum approach was exemplified in a kite making project. The CPs brought in a large kite and introduced the project by working with the children in the hall to interpret the movement of the kite and express it artistically through writing, dance and mark-making. They talked with the children about scientific principles of gravity, lift and wind direction. Back in the classroom they made a kite from scratch over a whole day. They folded a square of paper and dipped it into inks, discussed the properties of materials (absorbancy) and colour combinations. When the paper was unfolded a symmetrical pattern was revealed tying in with their learning of symmetry. The children then were taken through how to make the frame of the kite and tie the slip knots (D&T) then had a celebration where they all flew their kites on the school field. The event was blessed with perfect kite flying weather and a clear

blue sky against which 27 colourful kites flew brilliantly. It was an event of heightened meaning and emotion for all involved, reflecting the process which the children had been through and the sense of ownership they had. One child said it had been the best day of her life.

#### CP Responses

*'When we went in and observed we felt there wasn't the clarity of roles and that made us nervous about working in the way we wanted to work...also the planning was week by week and that made me nervous, usually the school will say these are the learning objectives for the next few weeks and this is what we need to cover, with this the planning was done on the Friday, eventually that got unpicked but initially it made me nervous. I think there was a bit of confusion...the more we write it down the more confident the teacher is so we had very detailed plans.'*

*'We know we work better when we plan, we spent a lot of time thinking about it and planning it and responding, responding to the teachers, responding to the children. I was really glad that (the other CP) and I have the relationship that we do, I think we've been each other's best support.'*

*'The children at Bullion Lane have done some beautiful dance, some beautiful improvisation...but if we'd gone in on the first day and said 'move' there would have been a lot of reluctance...it's about the journey you go on together and the trust they place in you.'*

*'It's been fantastic, I've loved every minute of it and I really miss being there, it challenged us.'*

#### Teachers responses

*'For me Dry Water's residency was the most valuable in terms of the educational perspective and possibly because of that we got on well, I felt like we were heading down the same road rather than two separate roads, the teaching one and the artist one.'*

*'Dry Water seemed to have control of it all, they were different because of the way they delivered it all, they had set plans, they knew what they were doing when they came in, everything was planned, everything was sorted out before the kids came in and it was all done, they basically took over everything and then you could sit back and observe the kids that aren't getting involved.'*

*'Dry Water were completely different, the planning was up front, I always had it the week before or the weekend before, I knew exactly what they were doing in terms of it being written on paper, they made cross curricular links which is fantastic. Immediately I knew my role and it was as a supportive role...I think what they did was amazing in many ways, some of the experiences that the children had were first class really, it was obvious that they put so much work into what they did, I just think the*

*children had a really nice experience with them. I sat back at times and just watched what was going on and it was absolutely fabulous... The whole way they presented themselves in their teaching, the quiet moments, the rituals they went through which were different for the children, they'd never experienced that before and they really worked...I've tried similar things in PE where I don't say a word and do a movement and the children copy but they took it to another level, extended it and did it for much longer than I would have dared and all of the children responded...holding the whole classes attention for extended periods of time for many of the things that we did...I think the involvement of the children was just focussed for a really long time.'*

#### Pupil Responses

*'With my group I have been miming. I have been doing a music hall, it was fantastic.'*

*'I'm confused because it seems to be all art but I don't care cos it's fun'*

*'They done tables with us in a different way'*

*'When I came in the class today I was really excited because Paula and Francis were here. My favourite bit of the day was when we pretended to be a factory worker. Just five minutes ago the whole class made string out of wool.'*

*'We have learnt to dance like Tommy the Tiny Tapper. We done a show and it was amazing and funny. We put on Tommy the Tiny Tapper's hat. People were throwing their hats off and the crowd went wild.'*

#### Summary

For the teachers, this residency was the most successful and there were several main reasons for this. Firstly, roles were very clear. Dry Water took the lead and the teachers were able to hand over the reigns to a large extent and this gave them the luxury to observe. Teachers found this much easier. Secondly, detailed planning on the part of the CPs reassured the teachers that learning objectives were being covered and they were able to see that 'on paper'. This also meant teachers could hand over preparation for lessons and this was very welcome. Thirdly, Dry Water were less constrained by the idea of movement which they interpreted very broadly. This meant that they provided a wide range of opportunities for the children which teachers could more easily link to learning objectives. Fourthly, Dry Water introduced diaries for the children and encouraged the children to regularly write their observations about what they had learnt. This eased the teachers' anxieties about recording. Fifthly, because they worked together they were only present in school for three days. This meant that on the other two days teachers were able to deliver traditional lessons and do all the things that they felt necessary to keep the children 'on track'. Lastly, the distinctiveness of Dry Water's work captured the teachers' imaginations and surprised them in terms of what the children were able to achieve.

For the pupils, this residency also provided some of the highlights of the whole project which children remembered vividly, particularly the kite day and the Victorian Music Hall project.



### Residency 3 - Garner Harris and Ruth Hindmarsh

*(Please note - Due to the fact that the two CPs in this residency had not worked together before, had different backgrounds and approaches it is not possible to talk about this as one coherent residency. It was comprised of two CPs working together for one week and then one CP working alone for the rest of the time. As such there are sensitivities in talking about this particular residency because of the need to talk about individual CPs. It is also the residency which was slightly more problematic in various ways. This has been a difficult balance of respecting confidentiality and reflecting some of the difficulties adequately in order to learn from them. The material here reflects predominantly what was already discussed openly in meetings and in reports)*

Garner Harris trained formally in dance and ballet but now works more with improvisation and teaches dance workshops at Dance City. He also performs his own work with his company Hand and Feet. Although Garner had substantial experience working in schools he felt that he had little experience working in a classroom setting delivering the curriculum. He was therefore mentored by Tim Rubidge, a dance practitioner at Dance City, throughout the project. In addition, Garner asked Ruth Hindmarsh of Momentum Arts, a physical theatre practitioner with extensive classroom experience in CP projects related to curriculum targets, to work with him during one of the weeks.

Due to Ruth's schedule she could not work the first week of the project and joined Garner in the second week. They both attended a session at school during Dry Water's residency to observe what they were doing and in addition attended the Friday afternoon meeting the week before Garner started to discuss plans. Both CPs felt that this was not adequate preparation, particularly as they had not worked with each other or met the teachers before due to the rather last minute planning of the project.

Garner initially wanted to develop a 'dance film' with the children around the concept of energy and link this into the curriculum. One of his main aims was to encourage the less engaged children in the class. Like wise Ruth's approach centres on building confidence and engagement. Both CPs felt that many of the children were very quiet and afraid of using their voices and so concentrated on building confidence to speak up, shout or recite expressively. In this residency some of the initial ideas were quite conceptual and both CPs recognised the tension between allowing space for developing creative ideas and having to deliver a set agenda:

*'My overall plan was to work with the children to create a dance film based around energy and movement by incorporating elements of the curriculum. I soon realised that the way I had planned to deliver my sessions was not going to be possible because there was already a very fixed schedule and scheme of work in place.'* CP

*'Initially when an idea starts to form and you try to verbalise it, it sounds like a nonsense because you haven't developed it enough. It's getting that idea across so it can be clearly seen where the learning objectives can be met.'* CP

The teachers in the initial meeting with Garner felt unconfident about how these ideas might be integrated with delivering the curriculum.

*'He wanted to focus on energy but we struggled to see how it fitted in terms of learning objectives.'* Teacher

Although the structure of the school day had been loosened sufficiently to allow Dry Water to deliver cross curricular themes, there seemed to be a reluctance to continue loosening the structure to take risks with this residency and allow these early ideas to develop in relation to the curriculum. The CP was seen as more *'laid back'* by the teachers, meaning he did not have written plans and that had a negative impact on the trust the teachers were willing to place in him.

Therefore, at first this residency defaulted to a fairly normal teaching week during which Garner primarily observed. Due to the lack of previous planning meetings he had initially told the teachers he wanted to 'step back' at first to build relationships with the children and teachers and take in the classroom environment and teaching routines. The teachers accommodated this whilst providing some opportunities to do movement with the children in the hall but these were not integrated into the teaching. However, towards the end of the first week, the artist experienced real tension between his perceived need to build the project organically and a lack of time to do this. The artist went from a high level of initial excitement about the project very quickly to frustration and a feeling of redundancy:

*'The first week felt like a real plod because I wanted to get stuck in but didn't feel like I could because I didn't understand what was happening. We didn't have any prior understanding of our practice...I wasn't prepared for what (the teacher) was doing...I felt ill prepared for this project...(I needed) more time and more understanding with the teachers about what was going to go on in the classroom and how time was allocated, I know they offered hall time but for me I thought that the emphasis for the programme was in the classroom and it was going to be inspired through movement.'*

In the second week Garner was joined by Ruth who similarly felt that the project had not really allowed sufficient time to prepare joint understandings and build relationships with the teachers and for the CPs to get to grips with what was expected or required. Nevertheless, the second week was better in the sense that Ruth had more experience in the classroom and was confident at negotiating with teachers to lead sessions. Garner and Ruth worked well together and their skills and approach seemed complimentary. In addition, during that week the class were asked to work on two specific creative projects, one around the issue of bullying and the other focussing on creating a poem for an in house poetry competition. Therefore much of the week concentrated on developing a piece of choreographed

drama/dance on bullying and bystanders and helping the class to write a poem to perform. The children seemed to really enjoy these activities, particularly the poem 'Monstrous Grime' which they wrote to link in with the cross curricular theme of the Victorians. The poem was performed by all the children using a strong rhythm and the children were incredibly expressive and memorised a complicated poem superbly. Garner worked with the children to move expressively (they all crawled onto the stage) and Ruth worked with the children on performance techniques. Together they created a stage in the classroom by marking out the floor into nine squares and teaching the children about stage left, right, centre etc.

*Observation: Movement and Bullies and Bystanders*

*The CP asked the children to line up around the edge of the classroom and reminded them about the different sorts of walking they had practised already in the hall. He asked each child in turn to walk from one end of the classroom to the other practising their expressive walking while the other children watched. There was some gentle music playing. The children seemed to enjoy this overall, some really enjoying the chance to have the stage and do 'funny' walks making the others laugh, other children were more reticent, perhaps self conscious. Then the CP asked the children to get into pairs and taught them how to do counter-balancing. Each pair stood side by side and held hands and leaned away from each other. The children practised this for a while and then showed the rest of the group in turns.*

*This counter-balancing formed the basis for choreographed piece around bullying and bystanders which the two CPs worked on with the children for a performance to the whole school. The piece centred on the idea that sometimes it's difficult to help someone in trouble because you are scared. The piece represented a victim being pushed into the ground by a gang of bullies by them all putting a hand on the top of her head and gently pressing her down. This symbolised powerfully someone being ground down mentally as well as physically. The pupil playing the victim held out her arm to people walking by, some of whom held her hand and leaned back to pull her up (using counter-balancing skills they had learnt) but let go at the last minute through fear and so she fell back down again. It explored counter-balance as a way of representing trust and strength. The children all had roles, some as bullies and some as bystanders. The children seemed to work very hard and apply themselves to learn the particular quality of movement required and seemed to get satisfaction out of this.*

For the rest of the residency Garner was on his own but more confident to take sessions. He worked with the children to film them crawling across a green screen and then showed how the children could draw their own environment to be superimposed on the film. He linked this in with the Victorian theme. He also started to try to integrate the curriculum for example using bodies and movement to help the children learn fractions.

One of the main features of his residency was the way he worked with quite high energy movement. In his work there was much more of an emphasis on solo performance with each child being expected to 'have a go' in front of the rest of the class with other children waiting their turn. For some children the opportunity to perform in this way seemed genuinely exciting and resonated strongly with their natural preferences. For some children perhaps being pushed to do something despite their shyness showed them what they could achieve and they clearly enjoyed this despite being 'embarrassed'. For some the benefits were less clear. During one session in the hall, at one time nine children 'opted out' either by asking to go to the toilet, saying they were feeling ill or sitting to one side. In addition the waiting time required for each child to take a turn sometimes created behaviour problems and this was something the CP recognised. Towards the end of the residency the CP started to move into more choreographed routines with the whole class involved.

Sometimes these sessions created an excessive amount of excitement and noise which many children found highly stimulating but this sometimes conflicted with the teachers' expectations of acceptable noise levels and class control. This in turn fed assumptions about the 'correct' way to lead a class which perhaps further hampered the relationships between the CP and teachers in this residency. However it was very clear that due to the lack of a strong relationship being built then this sort of feedback was difficult for the teachers to give. In addition no-one from DCCP was present at the Friday meetings to act as a facilitator where these sort of issues could be aired.

#### Practitioner responses

*'I think they've liked parts of it, I think they've got bored at parts of it. I think they've enjoyed the green screen work and parts of the movement in the hall, not all of it though, I think they really enjoyed the projects we did, the bullying and the coalmining, children in Victorian times... anything where they have to sit about and be quiet they don't enjoy it, if they are not occupied they don't enjoy it. That's something I've definitely learnt from this project.'*

*'I thought I would have had a much closer relationship with the teachers, I found having the two teachers confusing and a bit difficult in terms of what I was trying to do. I think the relationships needed to be built prior to me coming on board...I think there needed to be much more of an understanding in the project and I think I needed to have more of an understanding of the teachers expectations'*

*'Due to the last minute planning, working with another artist's ideas and the timetable restrictions there was too much to take into consideration and I wasn't quite sure what was happening. I felt less effective as an artist because of that and I felt like I let the teachers down.'*

*'I don't feel like I've even come close to achieving that (the aims of the project) and so for me personally it's been a failure.'*

### Teacher responses

*'Some of things he did were brilliant and he brought a lot of things out and created a lot of discussion. Ruth had a lot of ideas and they bounced a lot of things off each other...it's a shame she didn't stay as they would have worked well together.'*

*'Sometimes if I get stuck in class, I get a mental block, (the other teacher) will bounce something off me and I will be off again, it's teamwork and if you work well together your ideas can come together and work for the whole class, it was hard for Garner to work on his own most of the time and have no-one to bounce ideas off.'*

*'The movement was good...but it still was focussed on drama and voice work. They put together the poem and everything which was great and was just what was needed for that week and they did a really good job on it so in that respect they were spot on, I think that's where the strength of this residency was rather than the educational back up, maybe we weren't providing enough support.'*

*'This residency has been the least effective, there was a big drop in the quality of their (the children's) involvement, I could see the behaviour of the children going downhill.'*

*'It all sort of went to pot a little bit in the last week or so. I was really tired myself and fed up with the lack of structure...I think the energy of the project dipped, it affected me and I think it was difficult for Garner.'*

### Pupil responses

*'I love doing the DaLI project it is really good, today we have been doing dancing, recording and a poem.'*

*'We have been working with Garner and Ruth they have been very kind and very polite because they have been doing very nice things all the class think they are doing nice and polite things I think they are very polite because they are the best people.'*

*'I loved it, but it was embarrassing' (after performing solo in front of the class)*

*'We have been doing exercise!' (this was a common word the children used to describe what they were doing with Garner which they hadn't used previously with the other residencies, perhaps indicative of the increased physical work demanded)*

*'Your body's working harder, it starts to hurt, I can feel my body bumping.'*

*'We have been walking with Garner and moving about'*

*'He's freaky cos he can move his head from side to side, it's fun with Garner'*

### Summary

Although teachers and CPs alike felt disappointed that this residency had not been more integrated with the core curriculum, there were some important extenuating circumstances and other less visible positives. Whenever Garner walked into the schoolyard he was often surrounded by children, particularly boys, asking him to show them street dance moves, he interacted with children in the wider school in a way that the other residencies didn't seem to.

In terms of delivering the curriculum the lack of experience of the main CP was a major issue. This would have been mitigated by more preparation and building a joint understanding but in this case both CPs were parachuted into a challenging project and left fairly exposed, leading to a damaging drop in confidence levels. Greater involvement and presence of co-ordinating staff at review meetings would have helped here. In particular, the main CP was questioning his role in the school as a teacher or dancer figure and the way he should be involved in disciplining the children.

The previous residency had built a strong, positive relationship with the teachers and, as discussed, resonated with their need for detailed planning. This residency was very quickly judged unfavourably against the previous one partly due to the desire of the primary CP to 'feel his way' from abstract concept to curriculum delivery rather than present teachers with a pre-planned summary of sessions. There were issues that the teachers had with the residency which needed to be addressed through the co-ordinator, in addition there was a steep learning curve for one of the CPs. However, there was not the trust or facilitation mechanisms present for either teachers or CP to feel confident about openly addressing problems in a supportive way. This left the CP and the teachers unsure of what was happening and a mismatch in terms of how the CP and teachers viewed their attitude to the residency. The CP questioned how much the teachers really wanted the residency to work and to what level they really understood what working with an artistic process was about. The teachers felt that they had been as open as they could during the residency and tried to be flexible and accommodating to anything suggested.

In addition, during this residency there was a real slump in energy for the project as a whole. The teachers report that they had started to get very tired of the lack of structure and wanted things to be back to normal. In addition many of the children were physically tired and wanted their desks back. The main CP was working alone most of the time and found this very challenging at times in terms of keeping the children engaged.

In terms of building confidence and engagement with the children, some very good work happened in this residency especially around using movement to enhance the SEAL agenda around issues such as bullying. This residency allowed the children to be excited, loud and expressive although this may have been perceived negatively in terms of class control by the teachers. It contrasted heavily with the much quieter and gentler approach of the previous residency. It may have pushed some children

out of their comfort zones in a positive way but exposed others unnecessarily. In addition, there was a much greater emphasis on teaching dance performatively, getting the children to work on choreographed routines and working their bodies in particular ways which some children found exciting. The approach fulfilled those children who were disappointed earlier because initially they thought the project was going to teach them dance. Garner also provided an acceptable and 'cool' male dancer role model for many of the boys in the school.



## Structure of the classroom

The fact that tables and chairs had been removed from the classroom and cushions and a dance floor installed posed considerable controversy. The absence of tables meant that children had much greater freedom to position themselves where they wanted in the physical space of the classroom. This made for an element of disorder which teachers found hard to work with. They were unable to group children in terms of their different learning needs and they were unable to prepare class materials and place books on tables in advance during breaks. This meant considerable extra time giving out books eating into already constrained lesson time. They were also less able to keep particular children away from each other and in addition there was often a certain amount of disruption caused by the cushions (children leaping on them and playing with them, arguing over different colours etc). For the teachers the tables and chairs had provided a structure to facilitate organisation and control.

*'I think everyone has agreed that this would have been a much smoother running project if we had a space with tables and chairs and also a designated space for movement that you didn't have to share with others.'*

Teacher

For the teachers and some CPs the structure of the traditional classroom environment was closely linked to the idea of structured learning:

*'I think the fact that there were no tables and chairs changed the face of it, it felt like it didn't have as much structure. I'm very aware of how important structure is to children in order for it to be an effective learning environment, you can do all this creative stuff but it's got to be rooted and it's got to be re-enforced in a way that might not be artistic.'*

CP

Some CPs also expressed concerns regarding health and safety issues and this was also linked to the ability to pay attention and to learn:

*'I might have some health and safety reservations (about people's backs) and some of the kids have started lying down or lying on their tummies and I think the thought processes happen a lot better when you are sitting upright, when you lie down there's more of a relaxed state, the more dynamic thinking seems to happen when people are upright.'*

However, teachers noted the positives of being able to move around the class much more easily and getting down to the children's level made for a different dynamic in the classroom. Teachers recognised the greater ability they had had to observe children and talk with them during the project, although they didn't always necessarily link this to the different physical space. All CPs felt that clearing the room allowed for more intense, focussed work and an opportunity to develop physical, body, movement relationships and learning. The emptying of the space forced the class to operate differently in ways which were very important to the aims of the project:



*'Not having furniture in the classroom gave us a lot of time on the floor next to the children in physical moving contact, that was just interesting in terms of them feeling comfortable with me, with their bodies, seeing someone else comfortable in their body.'* CP

The children's response to the space varied from individual to individual and over time. They mostly seemed to enjoy the space and the cushions and made themselves comfortable in various ways. Some children complained about being uncomfortable, trying to write on the floor or a clipboard, whilst others liked the opportunity to lie down on a cushion while reading or listening. Some children missed their desks as they could not write neatly and that irritated them. A large discussion about the space took place in the middle of the project. This revealed that there was a very mixed view amongst the children with most preferring tables for some activities like writing and art.

Most people agreed at the end of the project that having a choice of spaces was preferable:

*'If space allowed I would have had desks in here on the outskirts of the room without a shadow of a doubt, it would have left a space in the middle of the room open and it would have given choice and that choice would have been interesting to observe.'* CP

## IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT

### Learning

Although the main aim of the project was to deliver the curriculum through movement it is clear that there were different understanding of what 'learning' meant. This created interesting tensions and discussions on how to evaluate the impacts of the project on learning. There is not room here to discuss all the different perceptions of learning but suffice to say that there was a general recognition amongst teachers and CPs alike of the constraints imposed by the curriculum and to a limited extent these were relaxed during the project to allow artists to work in the way they wanted. There was general agreement that not all parts of the curriculum could be covered due to the logistics of such a project, nor could they be covered entirely through movement. However, even allowing for these factors, all CPs expressed frustration regarding the demands the curriculum placed on schools and pupils and the limited view of learning this engendered.

*'The school out of necessity will opt for the pragmatic. Remember all those philosophical discussions about the body, about awareness through the body and the premise to plan a holistic scheme. But they have to be pragmatic and this has to be filtered through the national curriculum.'* CP

*'One of the biggest difficulties and for the teachers too is that it's a one term pilot and children need to be assessed and there is the expectation that children will have covered certain stuff. We have been stopped from covering certain things because they are not meant to do that until year 6.'* CP

*'We go in as artists with all these ideas around deep learning, co-construction of knowledge and we feel the curriculum as a legality, the power is still with the national curriculum.'* CP

*'it was a real eye opener for me how much information the kids have to take in, it's almost like a barrage, the curriculum forces teachers to push on, it's very much a push on environment...and I'm not sure how much of the core principles the kids are actually taking in or have the time to take in.'* CP

In terms of meeting specific curriculum learning objectives teachers viewed the project as problematic and mixed. They felt that certain subjects like IT, RE and structured music had been missed out. Teachers felt that that whilst the project may not have delivered so well on short term teaching targets, learning may have been more deeply embedded, and children have engaged with their own learning more effectively and a different way to learn was explored. They also viewed the project as successful in terms of engaging certain children more and this has had very positive effects on schoolwork for some. However, they felt that others had fallen behind on core curriculum subjects.

*'Children will learn in different ways and certainly for kinaesthetic learners they should gain tremendously out of this so I think the project is hitting a group of children which have not been getting sufficient input for their matched learning patterns.'* Teacher

*'Practitioners jumped in too high or too low and haven't pushed on sufficiently, if we are generalising I would say the pace of learning has been slow, the quality of learning experience has been fantastic and I would think has been embedded better than it would ever have been at times, I think the more able children haven't been pushed on as much as they might have been, I'm tempted to say that the less able children have had a whole lot more support than they ever would have had so it's swings and roundabouts in many senses...but my general gut feeling is that we haven't made as much progress as we would have done.'* Teacher

*'Time is unbelievably tight, even as a teacher I still can't get used to it, and the levels of differentiation in the class is huge. Some children have lost it completely, we are now back to doing one to ten, really back to basics.'* Teacher

*'It's been wonderful for [name of child], her maths and writing have progressed compared to last year and that may be the project, who knows, but she's been in her element at times and maybe if the project hadn't been happening those energies might have been elsewhere in a disruptive way.'* Teacher

It is noticeable when talking to CPs about learning that a much more expansive view of what learning meant was present and as such allowed CPs to view the project far more positively in terms of learning. Learning was embedded in a holistic view of the child and there was more focus and importance placed on creating the right conditions for learning and valuing different sorts of learning.

*'I'm resistant to calling it kinaesthetic learning because it's conceptual and visual and there are huge overlaps and threads between them. If you are using your body to make number bonds it's kinaesthetic but also conceptual and visual and you are using language as well.'* CP

*'My approach is very much getting to know them as individuals, what they are comfortable doing, what they are not comfortable doing, how they learn, how they are going to adapt, what's stopping them from learning, what's stopping them taking part'* CP

*'It's very much about co-construction of learning, involving the children, involving the teachers, about having ownership, about sharing ideas, about getting excited.'* CP

Some CPs were frustrated that more discussion had not taken place within the project about these different conceptions of learning and the consequence of particular views of learning on assessing the 'success' of the project.

## Wellbeing

Although the responses to learning impacts were complex and mixed, being entangled as they are with different views of what learning should be, it is clear that the project is viewed across the board as highly successful in terms of raising the children's overall wellbeing. It was noticeable that teachers seemed to compartmentalise learning and wellbeing into different boxes, whilst acknowledging their strong relationship. This is perhaps a result of needing to do learning evaluations based on specific assessments and procedures. CPs had a much more integrated view of wellbeing and learning. However, all participants acknowledged the importance of raising wellbeing to learning outcomes over the longer term. This includes raising confidence levels, working as a group, ability to focus, raising enthusiasm and engagement for learning, increasing expressiveness and creativity, enhancing a child's view of themselves and their skills, fostering positive behaviour. It's clear that the project seems to have had a significant positive effect on all these things.

*'I think that the counterbalancing helped them with cooperation. I did notice how much they trusted each other, because some of the children don't trust other people, it was good to see them do it. When I go back to teaching and I do circle time I could bring those sorts of things into my lesson.'* Teacher

*'We've given a stage to the likes of [names of three children] who've contributed so much in all sorts of ways and being so confident with it whereas from things you heard in the past that wouldn't necessarily have been the case.'* Teacher

*'[name of child] strikes me as a child who would stay in her shell and not say boo to a goose yet I've watched her week by week grow in confidence.'* Teacher

*'Simply the involvement and possibly a lot of the engagement with adults has possibly set them up for good relationships with other adults, not just teachers and dinner ladies in school. Some of them may not get a lot of adult interaction at home, so hopefully it's given them something positive to come away with.'* Teacher

*'They've been given responsibility for their own learning, quite significantly at times and they've taken that on board and come up with something, they've come up with some really good verbal and movement responses...speaking out, giving opinions, high level of confidence amongst the whole group, most of the children have tried everything that's been asked of them with very little resistance.'* Teacher

*'If we haven't hit the breadth of certain topics I think it's been up for in terms of their involvement and the building of their self esteem.'* Teacher

*'I think they have become so confident, willing to offer, excited to learn, curious, willing to explore, less of 'how do I do this?' or 'I can't do it', they're giving it a go, they are not frightened to fail.'* CP

*'I think the children will have some real positive body memories...that image of them swinging delighted, connected and rolling, they'll remember the physicality, the feelings, the motions of that, I also think they will sub consciously feel they were valued.'*

CP

*'I think they've become more independent about learning and that it's OK to have a go and you might not be completely right but you only learn through theorising.'*

CP

*'For year three they were so comfortable with each other. I think I recall only one time where somebody told on somebody else and that's unusual for a year three class. I work with an awful lot of year threes but there seemed to be a higher level of acceptance of each other.'*

CP

## Parental responses

Parents of 21 of the children were asked about the project when they came into the school in November for an appointment to discuss their child's progress with the teachers. The researcher sent a letter to all parents in advance (see appendix F) and spoke to the parents separately in the library. The researcher asked the parents about their reflections of the project and if they had noticed any changes in their child which they could reasonably attribute to the project. A summary of all responses is contained in appendix F. Below the main points are drawn out.

The responses were grouped into seven main themes which parents talked about:

### *Happier to come to school/happier at school*

The parents of seven children noticed substantial changes in their child's willingness to come to school. These parents said that previously they had had problems getting their child to school but now there were no problems at all. In addition the parents of six children felt that they were much happier and more settled at school than before. The parent of one child felt that because of all the changes her child had taken longer to settle down at school.

### *Excitement/enthusiasm for school and life in general*

Many parents talked about an increase in excitement in their children. Parents of ten children described a marked increase in how much their child talked about school to them: *'she talks about school more', 'she doesn't stop talking about it', 'he's always talking about it', 'she goes on for hours, I don't ask anymore!'*. Parents of nine children described a change in their enthusiasm for school and life in general: *'she's really excited about going to school', 'she gets up really early to go to school', 'she's suddenly switched on', 'she's bounced all of a sudden', 'she's suddenly got a zest for life', 'something has just set her off'.*

### *Increased confidence*

Parents of ten children had observed an increase in their child's confidence levels in terms of getting on with others and three parents said that previously their child would be very shy to talk to adults outside the immediate family but now they'll talk to anyone: *'he socialises more', 'get's on better with others', 'more open', 'mixes in better', 'less shy'.*

### *Increased activity levels*

The parents of nine children had noticed increased activity levels or changes in the nature of activity that their child engaged with: *'she wants to take up dance again', 'he's always dancing instead of playing on the playstation', 'he's started an interest in football', 'more energy', 'more active', 'plays out much more'.*

### *Increased creativity/expression*

Parents of six children had noticed a change in their children's vocabulary, that it had increased and that they were coming out with unusual words or were more expressive with their words. The parents of four children noticed that they had

started doing creative activities at home like writing or making things which they hadn't done before. The parents of two children who already did dance classes outside school noticed them being much more creative and expressive with their movements: *'now she choreographs herself'*.

#### *Behaviour*

Parents of two children claimed that the project had made a substantial difference to their child's behaviour. One child had got into trouble a lot at school last year and this had effectively ceased. The other child was often cheeky and badly behaved at home and she had completely changed this term and was more loving and caring. The parent of one child claimed that her child had been a bit cheekier at home since the project began.

#### *School work*

Parents of four children noted a marked increase in their child's concentration on their work: *'he comes in on a Friday and wants to do homework now!'*. Interestingly these four children were often the ones who were used to getting told off for not concentrating, three of them were in the Class 1/2 previously. The parents of five children had noticed an improvement in reading ability or interest in reading and writing. Parents of four children had slight concerns about progress with school work, two of these children were amongst the most academically able and the parents were more academically aspirational perhaps. Other concerns were that one child wasn't getting the one to one help she needed in maths and was struggling, and another child's interest in writing had gone downhill.

These responses from parents show another dimension of the impacts of this project, on home and social life outside school. There may also be impacts in terms of engaging parents in their child's learning and increasing positive relationships with parents and teachers. This short assessment did not have time and resources to be able to research this in depth but it is clear that the ripples of this project extended beyond the school walls.

Teachers expressed disappointment that the project had not engaged more with parents and had been under the impression that parents would come into the school much more to share and join in with activities. In the end there were only limited opportunities for parents to come into school as this was left mainly up to the individual residencies and there was a limited amount of time to plan and execute such events. Many parents themselves wanted more information and to be more involved with the project, some feeling very strongly that it was such a good thing that it should be publicised more widely.

## Attendance

There was a perception amongst teachers and CPs that the project had raised attendance levels for the class. Certainly for the first three weeks of term the class had the highest attendance in the whole school which was unusual for any class to achieve this:

*'The first three weeks the school was very excited as attendance was the best in the school, the teachers were cheering in assembly!'* CP

*'Attendance is better, in the beginning attendance was brilliant, you knew by the attendance that they wanted to be there, it's slipped off a little bit now, whether they are bored, tired or the time of year, it's Christmas time.'* Teacher

However, a brief examination of the statistics shows a more inconclusive picture. The average attendance for the class during the project was 94.8%. For the same children the average attendance for the whole of last year was 94% and for the Autumn term last year it was 93.8%. So there was a slight increase in these children's attendance but this is set within a wider school trend of improvement. For some of the children with very poor attendance last year, this was already improving before the project began. There are also many variables which can affect attendance quite markedly and don't bear a direct relation to the children's willingness to come to school for example a bout of flu or a planned family holiday. In a future project all these factors would need to be taken into consideration when assessing any improvements in attendance statistics which could be robustly attributed to such a project. It was beyond the scope of this work to look in detail at these variables and would be hard to judge over such a short space of time.

However, what does seem very clear is that many parents found it much easier to get their children to school. The parents of eight children in particular felt strongly that the enthusiasm caused by the project meant that, whereas before it had often been a struggle to get their children to school, now the children were always highly motivated to attend. Five of these children had been very poor attendees in the past. So whilst attendance is improving generally in the school with work being done with parents, the project may have made it far easier for parents to meet school expectations and perhaps reduced conflict and worry at home. This may also cause improvements to attendance statistics over the longer term. These are the hidden positive impacts which a future project could explore more thoroughly.

## Individual children case studies

The class was made up of 28 very different individuals who all reacted and interacted with this project in different ways making it difficult to generalise. Eight children have been chosen to focus on in more detail to show the complexity and range of issues this project raised for them.



Thomas

Thomas was in the Year 1/2 class previously so was making a large transition. Thomas's teacher described him as *'personality ridden'*. As a character he stands out in the class. He is a curious boy who seems to be constantly moving about and often occupied by something other than what he has been asked to do. Thomas's mum says that he has always loved school and has never had any resistance to coming to school. However, last year Thomas was in trouble at school a lot and his mum feels that the project has had a very positive effect in this respect:

*'We used to always get called in about him hitting people and bad attitude but that's completely stopped, well there's little bits of trouble but not to the same extent.'*

Likewise Thomas's teachers have seen a significant improvement in his behaviour:

*'His behaviour last year was appalling, he got growlies on a regular basis, this term he's had one and that was just a one off, so you know there's another example of where the project has maybe really worked for him.'*

Teachers, CPs and his mum all agree that they have seen him flourish during the project:

*'Thomas has had the stage as it were to be creative and give so much that's probably never ever happened in his life before, I think he's had more people listening to him than he's ever had, he's got great ideas, he makes connections, I don't think they would have come out in a normal classroom...'*

Teacher

*'Thomas sticks in my mind, just such a physical kid and just so pleased to be in this classroom where he could move while learning and quite a few times when he would say 'look at this, look at this!' wanting to show me his movement discoveries...the project had given him those chances to have that seen and valued and that was really important.'*

CP

*'He just wants to stand in front of the telly and dance all the time, I've never seen him do that before, he used to just go and play on his play station.'*

Parent

Thomas has ocular albinism, a sight defect which causes eye tremors and photo phobia and he has large print books and a special sloped surface for writing (which usually sits on top of his desk). Although Thomas's special needs advisor was initially concerned that the lack of tables meant it would be difficult for him, his mum felt that this project was a good idea for him because of his disability, *'there is a lot more talk than writing and it suits him down to the ground.'* Not only did the alternative structure of the classroom and the lessons suit Thomas but this also allowed his teacher to be able to appreciate his knowledge in other ways than through traditional recording methods:

*'Because of my role being on the outside at times I've had chance to speak to some of the children and when I speak to Thomas you actually realise what he does'*

*understand and you would never ever get that down on paper and you would never ever know the intensity or the spectrum of his learning.'*

Thomas's work consistently shows his unequivocal pleasure:

*'It was fun with the paint 'cos I loved getting it on my feet. It was, the picture was nice and it was nice colours and it was exciting. It looks like the painting was rushing into a different place.'*

Thomas' diary, scribed by CP

*'I learned how to do symmetrical shapes with pencils and shells. We put the string down the middle and used the mirror to see if it was symmetrical. I liked all of it. It's maths but it looks like we are doing art.'*

*'Division is nice if you have  $20 \div 5 = 4$  because I know the answer. If you have  $5 \times 4$ , 5 lots of four is 20. You can change them around  $20 \div 4$  is 5 (and)  $20 \div 5$  is 4, it's easy. When we used the shells it was easier to get your real work and do a number sentence.'*

*'I liked subtraction so much I could do it all day.'*

*'I like tennis so much'*

*'Our act was good when we escaped from the chairs. I done my finger trick and we did a little dance, the audience laughed, they liked it.'*

*'I liked dancing and I liked doing shadows with my partner. My movement was waving and drifting. I liked working with music. The wind music was relaxing. I liked doing movement. I was happy because I love moving. I love that it makes your brain work better.'*

Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 96.4% / Spring 2009 - 98.3% / Summer 2009 - 92.6%

Autumn 2009 - 91.3% (DALI project) Thomas had one day, one morning and a block of three and a half days of illness.

Dylan

Like Thomas, Dylan was in the more junior class the year before. He was also quite visible in the group but for different reasons. Dylan often appeared reluctant to do activities of any sort and works at a slower pace. He sometimes seems to struggle against inertia. Teachers often commented to him on the fact that he was last to get his shoes on and off, last in the queue etc. He often sits slumped with his arms folded. Initially in the project he was the only one often not smiling when the rest of the class were enjoying an activity or a joke with the teacher, he often appeared wary of people and activities and it took longer to build up trust with him.

His mum expected Dylan not to like the project because it was about dance and movement:

*'I was waiting to see if he got upset but he never, he's really enjoying it ...anything to get Dylan moving would be an improvement, he doesn't usually join in with things, he sits on his own. Last year his teacher said he didn't move, called him a sloth...he used to hate coming to school last year, used to have to drag him kicking and screaming, there is no problems coming to school now, he gets up gets dressed, no problem coming to school.'*

His mum has also noticed an improvement in his general enthusiasm:

*'He's different this term, he's talking more...he is just more open and outgoing, normally he'd just be quiet after school...now he comes in on a Friday and wants to do homework!'*

Similarly his teachers have been surprised by Dylan's response to the project:

*'Dylan is a very interesting child in that, from his background from last year, what I hear from other teachers, he took no part whatsoever in so many things, so his involvement relatively speaking has been enormous...what he has actually done, for him, is amazing.'* Teacher

*'Even when we had the cocoons out right at the beginning of the project he was definitely hands in his pockets kind of 'I don't, I don't do this' and by the last session I took with him he was rolling and physically wrapped up with someone else and prepared to share what he'd done and smiling.'* CP

*'Just watching Dylan, he's been on the periphery and actually getting up and moving. It's a real shift, I don't suppose you can explain it, it's a shift in ones sense of oneself and your place in the class, for him particularly he's made choices to actually join in because he didn't last year, he wasn't interested, he's made a big leap forward.'* CP

During a session in which the children were being taught how to tie a slipknot to attach the kite string to their kite Dylan was one of the few children who got this fairly quickly while most of the class took some time to master it. One of the adults asked him if he would go round and help the others and he looked quizzical. He came back after a few seconds and said *'what do I do?'* He seemed very unsure of

himself in that role as he was probably not used to being asked to show others a skill. The range of different activities allowed some of his skills to be recognised.

Dylan loved the cocoons, he loved to get inside and stay very still. As one CP said, *'He was in his element.'* This enabled the CPs to reframe perceptions of his physicality more positively *'you are so good at staying still, Dylan!'* In the several opportunities to get in the cocoons he beamed and seemed to find the experience extremely fulfilling. During a session with Bare Toed in which the class were doing an experiment with the cocoons they chose Dylan to get inside to see how far the cocoon stretched. At one point Thomas came over and started to rock the cocoon very gently, inside Dylan was smiling peacefully, eyes closed.

Looking at Dylan's books and diaries and observing him it is clear that initially his engagement was sceptical. His diary entries were factual, we did this and we did that. He then made some extensive lists in his diary of all the 'good things' about the project and all the 'bad things'. Good things included dancing in the hall, sitting on cushions, playing with stones, the artists, bad things included handwriting, mark making with paint and ball, and instructions. After this he started to record his feelings about what he had done 'I feelled very good today' or 'I like maths problems even'. CPs agree that for him the process had been slow but sure.

*'I like lying in the cocoons and swinging in them, I go up and down and turning.'*

During the third residency Dylan (and Thomas) seemed to experience more conflict and was asked to leave the classroom or sit out of the activities on several occasions. On one occasion I spoke to him when he was sitting in the corridor and asked him why he had been sent out, he shrugged *'messaging about 'cos it was boring.'* I observed that for the more energetic sessions in the classroom Dylan (and Thomas) became disengaged very quickly but when he was paired with Thomas to do counterbalancing they were both very focussed on this and enjoyed it.

Overall, for Dylan the DALI project seems to have had a significant positive impact in terms of his enjoyment of school. This has been observed by his mother, teachers, artists, researchers and by Dylan himself. This, in conjunction with his parental involvement in reading seems to be stimulating an increased interest in school work and having knock on positive effects in terms of his relationship with his parents in that he talks to them more. Again there are other variables like the change in teachers which may have had an impact.

#### Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 96.4% / Spring 2009 - 98.3% / Summer 2009 - 96.7%

Autumn 2009 - 92.9% (DALI project) He had four days of illness during the second week of the project.

Josh

Again Josh was in the Year 1/2 class and is a very shy, quiet boy and was often in tears last year when coming to school. His attendance had been quite poor. His parents have noticed a significant change in him this year:

*'He's very quiet and it's always been a job to get him to school, this year has been better, he has mixed more with the other children and the dance project has helped...he is more settled and getting on fine.'*

At home they haven't perceived any change in his behaviour *'he not so different at home, he's very laid back and we have to force him to go out!'*

Teachers commented on his changed attitude in terms of his happiness at school and the activities he has taken part in which have surprised them:

*'He was dragged into school last year kicking and screaming just about, his mum warned me about this in the first week but Josh has come into school every day with a smile on his face. He is a less able child in many senses, he is a nervous child but he's taken part in so many different things. I got to know Josh in the first few weeks and if you had said to me he's going to do this, this and this, I would have said no he's not, but he has. He has performed in front of that green screen, he has really got into it, he has been part of groups, he doesn't record very much, he doesn't verbalise very much but he is up there physically doing things that I wouldn't have imagined a child of his nature doing. So in many senses I would imagine that the project has been a real boon for him.'*

Teacher

*'Josh is just getting happier and happier.'*

Teacher

Josh himself finds it difficult to speak in class and is not forthcoming when asked a question. Other children tend to speak for him. His friend told me *'Josh is always smiling now!'*

#### Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 89.3% / Spring 2009 - 78% / Summer 2009 - 77%

Autumn 2009 - 80.2% (DALI project) Josh had four days agreed family holiday in the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the project, a full week of illness in the 9<sup>th</sup> week of the project plus three other days of illness scattered through the term.

### Ashleigh

Ashleigh seemed to be a quiet shy girl who wasn't forthcoming in contributing to lessons. She was not very 'visible' in the class. As such in meetings and in conversations teachers and CPs would not mention her so much, preferring to talk about other children who were showing more progress or who were challenging in different ways. For Ashleigh the real progress seemed to be happening at home and this started to emerge only when her parents came in towards the end of term. Her parents say that last year her attendance was poor and that she struggled with her work but the project has made an enormous difference to her:

*'Last year she didn't want to come to school, she had problems with attendance, now she is bouncing out of bed, the other morning it was 6.30 saying 'is it time to go to school yet?' – we sent her back to bed!'*

*'it's made a big difference in her schoolwork, she's more enthusiastic now...uses bigger words and breaks words down better...her memory is much better as she is doing less writing and having to memorise things now. She brought a poem home to learn and she did that no problem.'*

*'The DALI project has opened her up, it's like she's come into her own. Now she is constantly on the go, it's like she's got a zest for playing out. Before she would only play out for half an hour, now she's out all the time, can't get her in!'*

*'Ashleigh is, according to parents, so up and bubbly and positive compared to last year.'*

Teacher

Looking at Ashleigh's work it is striking how much attention she focuses on the people involved in the project:

*'I have had Rachel for as long as I can remember and Frances and Paula have been here for about six days and Laini has been here for about six days and I have known Frances and Paula about seven days and I have known Rachel about twelve days and I did kites, a small one and a big one and I have known Karen for about six days and Oran has got a camera and he is very nice, very nice and I had fun flying my kites and I had fun making it go higher and higher, I had fun pulling it down and down. Jo is very, very nice.'*

Pupil diary.

### Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 79.3% / Spring 2009 - 86.4% / Summer 2009 - 99.2%

Autumn 2009 - 92.9% (DALI project) Ashleigh had three and a half days of illness scattered throughout weeks 9-14.

### Kirsty

Kirsty is usually the first with her hand up in class. She stretches her hand up as high as it will go and makes desperate sounds to get the teacher's attention. One of her friends commented to me *'Kirsty is going to burst!'*. She is an academically able and willing pupil and according to her mum she has always loved school and so the project has not made any difference to her enjoyment of school. *'At first she thought it was weird, but she was excited too.'* She takes a pride in her work and from very early on in the project verbalised that she didn't like the floor for writing as it hurt her back and she couldn't write neatly. Her mother felt that she has learnt that from home :

*'If she lays on the floor to do her homework I always say to her 'do it at the table, it will be neater' so that's my fault, I've drummed it into her...I've noticed she's using bigger words and her vocabulary has increased, she talks more about what she's done, she talks about the project at home.'*

Early on in the project when the children were doing some writing and some were grumbling about having to write on clipboards, the teacher asked if anyone wanted to write at a table, a number of hands shot up including Kirsty's and she went to take her work outside to the corridor. For both teachers and parents the project has been mixed in terms of Kirsty's academic progress:

*'Kirsty, in one sense everything she's produced on paper doesn't reflect the interest she has shown verbally, she's had a quality of response and shown a decent level of understanding but in her recording that has not come through. Kirsty hadn't made the progress that she would be expected to.'*

Teacher

For Kirsty, her assessment of her own learning is slightly different and it is possible that the project gave her a different view of her own learning and how she could express that:

*'I have learnt more about dance than I thought I would because I have really tried my best at it.'*

*'We closed our eyes and we thought of which way the wind was blowing and Francis gave us a paintbrush that we had to make the patterns on the massive piece of paper. It made me feel relaxed.'*

It was slightly surprising that Kirsty was one of the ones who said she was very sad to see the tables and chairs come back in considering that she was quite vocal about wanting a table and chair early on - *'(I) liked it on the floor better because it is more comfy on the cushions, (I'm) sad because (I) liked the cushions.'*

### Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 91.4% / Spring 2009 - 96.6% / Summer 2009 - 90.2%

Autumn 2009 - 98.4% (DALI project) Kirsty had one afternoon of illness during the 11<sup>th</sup> week of the project.



## Lewis

Lewis is one of the more academically able pupils. He is quick witted and tends to verbalise if he doesn't like something or finds it 'boring' and he has clear preferences. He is very interested in music, writing songs and performing and will regularly perform songs in the school yard to his friends. His mum said that *'he stands in the cul-de-sac on his own doing 'Thriller'! I tell him to come in, I don't know where he gets it from!'*

Mum *'Lewis has enjoyed it but the way he learns I don't think it's been particularly beneficial, he learns best in a structured environment but he's bright so he would learn in any setting.'*

Lewis is very clear on the bits he has liked and the bits he hasn't. He particularly enjoyed the music hall work in the second residency as it gave him the opportunity to work on an act to perform on the makeshift stage in the classroom. His mum said that *'some days Lewis can't wait to get to school, dying to get to class for the stage.'*

*'For the last seven weeks my school life has been different because we have had a dance floor in the classroom. We had two dance teachers in the classroom called Rachel and Lynn to teach us dancing. I enjoyed going in the cocoons and trapeze. We done dancing for about four or three weeks and then Frances, Paula and Karen came. Since Frances and Paula came we have been doing about Tommy the Tiny Tapper. I have enjoyed pretending to be an escapologist. I have also enjoyed kites, symmetry, maths and stones. I have not enjoyed drawing around [name of child], modifications, writing instructions, big art and shadows. Doing music with Keith was also quite fun. I love music and singing. It is really fun. I've learnt how to do a fair test, division, to make kites and about Victorians.'* Lewis' diary

Both teachers and CPs agreed that for him the project has been a mixed experience:

*'Lewis is obviously very able, but he has shown a lack of concentration, he could have given more, would be expected to give more but didn't, maybe he was bored at certain times. His involvement hasn't been huge.'* Teacher

*'Lewis I think was frustrated a lot of the time and I can understand why and again we gave him a whole list of divisions and he loved that. He was probably quite frustrated when we did kites, he loved it the first time but when we did the second prototype I heard him say 'for god's sake not another kite!' which really amused me. Lewis is a knowledge eater, he's at the feast, he has a bit and then he knows it. For a lot of children, the experiential learners, the step by step learners doing things again is important, I think Lewis gets principles very quickly and that's his way of learning, he's very cerebral and he's quick.'* CP

It's clear that Lewis had the confidence to opt in and out of activities, and tended to pick and chose when to get more involved and when to 'coast.' He could have been challenged more, he enjoyed the symmetry and picked this up quickly but the teacher felt at the time that he needed to be given an even harder task and be



pushed more. Where possible the CPs and teachers tried to challenge him with individual tasks but this was quite difficult due to the unstructured nature of the classroom and the focus of the CPs on deep embedding of learning rather than speed. Towards the end of the project he seemed to become even more ambivalent:

*'I got up this morning, had the chocolate in my advent calendar, had breakfast and went to school. When I got there I was wondering why Mr Seeley wasn't here. We pretended we were in a Victorian factory. I liked half the day. The reason why I didn't like it is because it was long. Now we are going home.'*

He was very pleased when the project ended and the tables and chairs came back in, he punched both fists in the air and said 'Yesss!' when he walked into the classroom and saw the desks.

#### Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 100% / Spring 2009 - 94.9% / Summer 2009 - 100%

Autumn 2009 - 94.4% (DALI project) Lewis had one day of illness in the 4<sup>th</sup> week and two days of illness in the last week of the project.

### Bethany

Bethany is a girl who seems a lot younger than the rest of the class and she is another child who was in the year1/2 class last year. She had trouble settling down at the start of term and would often get very distressed and tearful. She was physically very clingy to adults. Her mum feels that Bethany has always been generally happy at school but initially found the term very hard. Like wise teachers and CPs felt Bethany was struggling to cope initially:

*'She didn't like the change of teachers, she'd had Mrs Maughan for two years, she doesn't like change, she can be so emotional and up in the air, that's just the way she is...she's got strong opinions...she's happier now, she's loving it, looks forward to different activities. She does exercises at home, keep fit, she's done it in class and enjoying it and doing it at home...she's happy in class with other children more, sometimes she has a problem working with other children, now it's much better.'*

*'Bethany has settled, she has had her moments, she was unhappy at first, she verbalised that she didn't like the project, she didn't like the situation ...but she has settled and her negativity is far less...but she has achieved in so many ways and she's had a platform and space to contribute in so many ways...'* Teacher

*'Bethany because she couldn't get her head round the way things were working, she didn't like change and I don't think she could grasp what was happening, to her that wasn't an everyday school day, this wasn't school life, going in without tables and chairs and people she didn't know teaching her so I think that had an effect on her, I think she would probably have been a bit scared'.* Teacher

*'She was struggling generally, struggling with two new teachers and then not having desks, I think that (the project) may have been a nudge too far for her.'* CP

It is very difficult to say if the project helped or hindered Bethany in making the transition to a new class. It appears that the drastic nature of the change unsettled her more than would have been the case. She certainly liked the cocoons and found them comforting - *'I like being in the cocoons because it is cosy'* - and being able to have her family come in was important. Later she did enjoy the project. Because there were a lot of new faces she had the ability to go around and get attention from a lot of people but in some ways this prolonged her settling down. Her teacher's perception was that she would just have to grow up and get used to it, to harden up a little bit. It may have taken Bethany longer to adjust as she was relying on the support of the adults in DaLI rather than her own coping systems. However, she did adjust and by the end of the project felt *'really sad because the tables and chairs are back'*.

### Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 93.6% / Spring 2009 - 91.5% / Summer 2009 - 98.4%

Autumn 2009 - 91.3% (DALI) Bethany had one day of illness in the first week and three and a half days in the 10<sup>th</sup> week

### Hannah

Hannah is another child who verbalises when she doesn't like something or when it is 'boring'. She often verbalised at the start of the project that she didn't like dance and movement. She seemed vulnerable in terms of her confidence and described herself as someone who liked to make things and not dance. She particularly liked the second residency due to the creative making and lots of different opportunities to fit in with her particular skills, preferences and image of herself. CPs worked quite hard to recognise this and allow her time to explore or to meet her needs.

It was noted how often Hannah appeared to be very engaged in an activity but then reflected afterwards that she hadn't liked it. By gently probing CPs and researcher discovered that it seemed to be the more interpretative movement she didn't like. She said she really didn't like it when they had to pretend to be kites as she found it '*really boring.*' However, she was very engaged in making and flying the kite describing it as the best time of her life. Several adults commented on how she was 'glowing'. The whole experience seemed to give her a great amount of fulfilment. She also really enjoyed her tennis lessons. Later the Victorian Music Hall project led to a change in the way she saw herself and saw dance. The CPs allowed her to do the art for the music hall performances and to be the MC as she professed not to like dance or to want to perform. In fact she performed prodigiously as the MC and enjoyed making the class laugh. She got very excited and danced on the sidelines while others were on stage. This experience seemed to dramatically shift her perception of performance and she subsequently asked several times '*can we make a dance?*'

Despite Hannah being initially reticent about the project her parents say that the project has had a positive effect on her:

*'She's doing more at home because she's repeating stuff she's done at school, she comes out with new things all the time, more than last year, she's got more energy now, she's always upstairs making stuff and that's different to last year.'*

Her teacher's perception is that:

*'Hannah has had problems in the past and probably still has lots of problems but the sorts of things that she gets involved in she's probably taken it to a much higher level in terms of her self esteem, she has succeeded in so many different ways and I think she has felt that success. She lacks communications skills, she doesn't read at a particularly high level, her level of understanding is not always there...but some of the things that she's done, taking leading roles in things at times just surprises me in my perception of her.'*

However, late on in the project she was still quite vulnerable. When the residencies came back for the two days at the end of the project the class were asked to do a spinning exercise. Many of the children found this challenging. Hannah found this very difficult and she became increasingly frustrated that she couldn't get it. She wrote in her book '*I don't like it at all, I thought we could improve with it.*' She drew an unhappy face. She seemed to find it particularly hard to take as her image of

herself is as a person who is good at making things and she was in tears for most of the session.

Hannah seemed to gain immensely from this project, especially during the second residency which resonated with her desire to make things. She enjoyed the use of objects and the scope to create different things. Her making skills were recognised and validated. The kite making and flying was a particular high point for her. She discovered that she could make people laugh and that she liked *some* dancing. However her reactions were often complex and her view of herself seemed fragile and easily disrupted at times. She remained ambivalent about certain aspects of the project right to the end and perhaps a longer period of sustained work would have had a deeper and longer lasting effect on her confidence and engagement levels. She seemed to flourish mid project and then falter.

#### Attendance

Autumn 2008 - 100% / Spring 2009 - 98.3% / Summer 2009 - 100%

Autumn 2009 – 100% (DALI project)

## ENDINGS

The project ended one week before the Xmas break. On the penultimate afternoon Oran the photographer came in to show the children some of the footage he had taken. He had edited some 'fun' films for them using special effects like speeding up and slowing down motion. The children sat on the floor and watched the films excitedly. Seeing the responses of the children with much spontaneous exclamation, joining in and laughter re-enforced the richness of experience that the project had offered the children and their high levels of engagement, not only with the actual delivery of the project but with the documentation and evaluation of it.

On the final afternoon CPs from all the three residencies came in to spend the afternoon with the children to have fun and say goodbye. At the end of an afternoon of games and singing there was lots of hugging, high fives and farewells between the artists and the children. The quality of relationships and attachments formed was clear.

The next day the children arrived to a very different classroom with carpet, tables and chairs. The children came into the class gradually in ones and twos and the teacher allowed them to sit where they liked and gave them time to take in the new surroundings. There was high excitement as they walked in and lots of exclamations of 'wow!' and 'oh my god!' as they noticed the difference. Many of them took their shoes off automatically and there was some amusement about this. Although a couple of the children expressed uncertainty about where to sit, there was relatively little fuss about who was going to sit where and the children settled very quickly into places of their choice. A quick straw poll of the children's immediate reactions was taken and they were asked to say how happy or sad they were on a scale of 1-5 where 5 was very happy and 1 was very sad. Thirteen children said they were very happy and nine said they were very sad, one child in particular was tearful<sup>4</sup>. Six children chose the middling options saying they '*don't mind anything*' or '*like both ways*'. Both teachers gave their views to the class and both said that they were happy it was over but they were both feeling a little bit sad too.

The ending of the project to a large extent was overshadowed by the excitement of Christmas and the activities and party lined up for the following week in school. The teacher said that at this time of year he struggles to keep the children from getting very 'hyper'. On the day of the Christmas party none of the children expressed any regret and were just excited and talking about the Xmas holidays coming up.

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<sup>4</sup> There may have been other reasons for this, she complained of a stomach ache and was one of the last into the class and so perhaps did not get the seat she wanted.

## DISCUSSION

It is clear that all the children enjoyed the project and were generally happy to take part. For many of the children it increased their happy attendance at school, impacted significantly on their attitudes to school and learning and gave them added confidence. Some children took a little longer to settle into the project and in one case the transition to a very different situation may have been harder for the child. For a minority, the impact has been less significant. For some children it may have changed their opinion of their skills and allowed them to develop a more rounded view of themselves separate from expectations and assumptions of parents and teachers.

For a few children the project has had substantial benefits, most of these children were from the year 1/2 class (Thomas, Dylan, Ashleigh, Josh) and so their transition would have been greater perhaps. The project allowed increased opportunities for aspects of their personality to shine positively, to be seen as assets rather than obstacles to learning. To some extent this affected the way they were perceived by their teachers and this created a virtuous circle of positive behaviour being praised. In the words of a CP, they became visible for positive reasons instead of negative ones.

There was a greater opportunity to develop good relationships with a range of supportive adults who were not in a teaching role. Whilst a very positive experience for the children, it was generally felt that this involvement was 'artificial' in that it didn't reflect a normal classroom situation and that it somehow 'skewed' the project. It was difficult to determine if positive results were due to the creative practices or the amount of attention the children were receiving. In addition there were a whole set of other variables such as the natural development of each child; the change of teachers; the time of year; changing circumstances at home; relationships with peers changing.

Talking to the parents helped to give a much more rounded view of the potential impacts on the children. A very striking finding is how much more the children were talking, to each other, to their parents about school, to adults outside the family etc. The role of talking in learning is very important and also in developing social and emotional relationships. Also striking is the difference in the children's enthusiasm for school. Although teachers were ambivalent about short term impacts of the project against formal learning targets the longer term impacts of these factors on learning can be crucial. Teachers felt that the pace of learning had slowed but possibly became more deeply embedded. Many CPs raised the issue of ensuring learning was meaningful and relevant to each child. This is a more complex issue involving many variables and research would need to be specifically designed to assess this, that was not the case here. What is clear though is that the project was successful in increasing many of the factors commonly assumed by teachers to be necessary for a successful learning environment including focus, concentration, enthusiasm, happiness, having fun, being engaged and switched on.

In addition the parents were also generally happy and supportive of the project. In many cases parents perceived that this had had a direct positive impact on behaviour and relationships at home. In many ways this evidence is the most compelling and a future project would need to incorporate the views of parents as a more integral part of the process.

### **Recommendations**

Based on professional, parent and child responses and preferences the following main issues arising need to be taken into account in a future project:

- Having longer preparation time with all artists and teachers coming together in advance to develop joint understandings and joint working practices. This would include teachers and artists trying out movement based activities and exploring how these may be linked to the curriculum.
- Agreeing in advance learning objectives, time structures and expectations.
- Discussing in advance suitable methods to assess learning in relation to a movement based project, acknowledging different perceptions of learning.
- Creating a flexible learning space which includes both desks and chairs and also a space to move and create. Within this children could be given more choice about where they feel more comfortable for different activities.
- Longer residencies giving time to develop relationships and working practices with teachers, children and parents
- Including parents more centrally in the process
- Developing a project identity rather than a series of very separate residencies with little integration.
- Embedding recording work with children into the delivery of the project e.g. keeping DaLI diaries as the Dry Water residency did.
- Streamlining the evaluation and documentation work, less people in class and teachers and children not getting consultation fatigue
- Starting the project with a class and teacher who already know each other, maybe in the Spring term so the teacher can more effectively judge impacts.
- A stronger engagement with the whole school and links to CPD
- Artists to have confidence to lead sessions

## FUTURE RESEARCH

This project showed the limitations of a short term project to assess longer term impacts on learning and wellbeing. It also raised some very interesting questions from preliminary findings. Therefore, a longer term research project which followed children from year 3 to year 6 would be beneficial. It would also be very interesting to follow children after this too as educational inequalities start to really manifest themselves in the transition from Key stage 2 to 3 and it would be important to know how such interventions early on could potentially change outcomes for children later. It would also be interesting to know how increased confidence and enthusiasm for school can have other knock on effects longer term, including impacts on family and community relationships. A research project which was able to develop much closer relationships between teachers, CPs, children, parents and family support staff over a longer term would generate a body of very rich data which could be investigated in all sorts of ways for all stakeholders. For example, the very interesting initial findings of the impact of the project on pupils' talking levels would be interesting to research in more detail. The significance on talking levels could be explored in relation to learning, emotional resilience, confidence, family and community relationships and behaviour.

In this project it is clear that there was a great deal of difference in the ways people conceptualised the relationship between learning, movement and wellbeing. We would need to provide a clear conceptual basis to inform data collection whilst valuing the different perspectives of participants. One possible method is the Theory of Change model, a highly collaborative evaluatory framework allowing research participants and researchers to jointly set the theoretical framework for institutional change and decide upon indicators for evaluating impact.

There are various ways a project like this can be investigated. Some other themes which are emerging from preliminary analysis of the Bullion Lane data which could be interesting as lines of research:

### Rules/subversion

There are all sorts of ways that the children understand what it is they are supposed to be doing through explicit and implicit rules. There is also an interesting relationship between rules and rituals in school and those which CPs introduced. There were interesting ways in which the project allowed staff to subvert their own rules and school rules, to voice their disquiet. There were interesting ways in which the children pick up on this and seek to become complicit with them against the school system. What rules do practitioners enforce, how do these re-enforce/subvert school rules, rules of teachers, children's rules.

### Role of Humour

The role of humour was identified as important in terms of building relationships. This humour allowed traditional boundaries to be crossed (this happens in school anyway), teachers telling CPs off for not paying attention to the amusement of the children, CPs getting teacher to do embarrassing things etc.



### Language and talking

Different languages used by teachers and CPs. The way they have taken on/rejected each other's language. Language has both hindered and re-enforced relationships in this project. Also the way that language and vocabulary is taken on by children. The way the project has enhanced creative vocabulary. Words made up by the children to describe their feelings (*'It was really 'ponasquirical' is that a word?'*). The way that the project seemed to increase the children's talking and their confidence to talk, the way it gave them something new to talk about. How talking more has effects upon relationships in and outside the family.

### Spaces

What is invested into the dance floor space, what does it represent? Similarly what is invested into a space with tables and chairs. How are these spaces related to the notion of 'structure'. One CP mention 'thinking spaces' what does that mean? In a way the dance floor may represent formal dance training, images of dance classes, a disco dance floor...how has it been used? Some CPs treated it with reverence and invested it with 'dance' meaning, with validating the value of movement through the investment the school has made in placing the floor down. Others saw it as 'clearing the room' as a void, an empty palette with no associations. Similarly the use of the hall was seen differently. Some feeling that hall time should be maximised, others felt this was missing the point as the focus of the work needed to be in the classroom. There were also tensions with other staff in school (dinner staff and other teachers) over use of the hall. Walking to and from hall, use of hall, understanding by different practitioners. Use of outdoor spaces. There were also very pleasant spaces in school which appeared not to be used (the two inner courtyards). Different rules, expectations and behaviour in different spaces.

### Identity

There were some interesting issues which came up about identity on several levels. Who identifies with whom? How has project impacted on children's identity? Has it made them special as an individual/in school/as a group? How has it changed their sense of themselves and their belonging? There are also interesting aspects of identity relating to teachers as individuals and professionals. There was also talk about a 'DaLI identity' where DaLI clothes were seen as important to signify belonging to the project and doing something 'different' although some children didn't like the clothes 'clown clothes'). What was the identity of the project and how did it interact with other forms of identity?

## Appendix A

### **Pupils set to learn everything through dance** By David Whetstone

Evening Chronicle    September 11, 2009



ONCE children had to sit still in class and woe betide the fidget when teacher was talking.

But that old-fashioned approach to education has been given its marching orders at a North East primary school – Bullion Lane in Chester-le-Street, County Durham.

Returning to school this week, one class of seven-year-olds found their desks and chairs had been replaced by cushions on the floor.

As an experiment, the 28 Year 3 pupils will learn everything this term through the medium of dance and movement.

Professional dancers will assist class teachers Edwin Seeley and Sarah Hamilton in ensuring that subjects such as maths and science are learned using bodies as well as brains.

Mr Seeley, who is also Bullion Lane's PE coordinator, said the school had worked with arts organisations in the past but never in this way.

He agreed he had been a little sceptical initially but said: "I'm open minded enough to say let's give it a go and see what happens.

"Yesterday the children were learning about adjectives in the playground, acting them out, and today we have been doing maths."

For science, the children would be studying light and shadows with opportunities for plenty of outdoor movement.

Colleague Miss Hamilton said: "I think it's great – innovative but also a little bit scary." Acting head Margaret Lloyd said the children taking part in the experiment had been told to wear PE clothes and take their shoes off before entering class.

"We spoke to the parents very briefly at the end of last term and they supported it.

"We hope the experiences of this class will be shared throughout the school."

She was optimistic that the term of learning through dance would benefit the children who would absorb and retain more of what they were taught. But what of the seven-year-old guinea pigs?

"It's great because I like dancing," said Ellie Inglis.

Classmate Georgia Rayner agreed it had been fun so far. "We have to bring big water bottles," she said.

"But that's girls," pointed out Jack Lish. "We like football."

Friend Corey Errington had identified an early benefit. "The cushions are so comfy that I nearly fell asleep," he confessed.

## Appendix B

### Participant Information Sheet

#### Dancing and Learning Inspired (DALI) Project

Dear Participant,

Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed by Durham University for the Dance City Creative Partnership DALI project. This brief introduction will provide some information about the interview.

As you know DALI is a pilot project investigating the role of movement and dance in delivering the curriculum in primary education. It was conceived and is co-ordinated by Dance City Creative Partnership. One main aim of the pilot is to uncover issues, challenges and questions which could be explored more fully in a future larger project potentially integrating an academic research element. Therefore the role of Durham University is to advise in the development of this research element. Your interview will provide us with important feedback which can inform this process and will enhance information you are already giving for the DCCP evaluation.

The interview will take approximately one hour and will be informal and relaxed. I will provide a structure by asking a series of questions about the project. A guide list of questions are attached. We will not be able to cover all questions fully in the time available and so what we focus on will be led by you. Whilst I would like to address most broad issues listed I will encourage you to speak in more detail about the things you are most interested in.

In order to make it easier for me I would be very grateful if I could record the interview. This is because it is very difficult to take adequate and accurate notes during the interview. Often interviewees find that initially they may be very aware that they are being taped but within a few minutes completely forget. If you don't feel comfortable being taped then please let me know.

The information you provide will be absolutely confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside the research team within the Centre for Medical Humanities. The tape and any transcripts will be kept secure. In any written report of the project we may use selected direct quotes but these will be anonymised. As this project involves a very small team of practitioners there are particular issues regarding anonymity from your colleagues and we will be particularly sensitive about this. We will discuss this in more detail with you prior to the interview.

Once again, thank you very much for your participation.

If you have any questions beforehand then please feel free to contact me [k.e.scott@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:k.e.scott@ncl.ac.uk) or on 07914912732. I look forward to talking with you.

Karen Scott  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
Centre for Medical Humanities  
Durham University

## **Appendix C**

### **Questions for practitioners**

#### **Background/approach of practitioner**

Could you briefly describe your work and how you became involved in this project?

Could you tell me something about your general approach/ethos to working with children and maybe briefly what training/learning has informed this?

#### **Understandings/expectations of the project**

This project is entitled Dance and Learning Inspired, can you tell me what 'dance' means to you in the context of this project?

Could you tell me what you understand the aims of this project to be? What do you personally feel about those aims?

The brief for the project mentions wellbeing, what do you understand by that? How do you think this project could affect wellbeing?

#### **Planning/preparation of the project**

How do you feel about your input into the planning and preparation of the project?  
Is there anyway in which the planning and preparation could have been improved?

#### **Relationships with teachers**

How do you feel about the relationships between you and the teachers on this project?  
Can you give me examples of when you think the relationship really worked? When not?  
In what ways has this facilitated or hindered delivery of the project?

#### **Relationships with pupils**

How do you feel about your relationship with the children? How you think they see you?  
How does your relationship with them differ to their relationship with their teachers?  
What do you think you are bringing to the children that differs from what the teachers bring?

Are there any occasions where your relationship with the children in general or with particular children became particularly heightened or strained for any reason?

#### **Relationships with other practitioners/staff on project**

How do you feel about the relationships with other practitioners/DCCP staff?  
How do you feel about support/communication between staff on the project?  
How has this facilitated or hindered the project?

#### **Impact of the project on pupils**

Do you have a sense of how this project has impacted on the children? (Whole class or individuals)

Are there any particular pupils you noticed benefitting and in what ways?

Are there particular pupils you feel have not benefitted or have been disadvantaged in any way?

Are there any generalisations you feel you can make regarding how this has impacted on the whole group?

Any changes noticed for example in:

- Attention and concentration
- Attitudes to learning
- Being generally content in class, happy at school
- Relationship with other children/teachers
- Changes in physical awareness/activity
- Social interaction/empathy
- Working in groups
- Confidence/self awareness

Are there any gender differences you have noticed in terms of how the children have responded to your work/the project?

### **Impact of project on the school**

How do you think this project has affected the teachers? What do you think will happen when it is finished? Which bits will the teachers use?

Are you aware of how the project is perceived within the wider school by other teachers, other pupils or any parents? How do you think the project will effect the wider school?

### **Practical/logistical arrangements**

What has smoothed or hindered the project in terms of practical arrangements?

For example things like:

- Clothing/cushions/dance floor
- Role of DCCP
- Value/role of weekly meetings
- School building/access to hall/school routines
- Research/evaluation/documentation

### **Professional practice and delivery of project**

Do you feel you have learnt anything from the project which will affect your own practice? If yes, can you give examples? Have you felt able to work in the way that you wanted/expected, if not why not?

What's your opinion on having the three short residencies as opposed to one group of practitioners working long term with the children?

### **General summing up**

What have been the real successes of this project? And the things that really didn't work?

This project was a pilot, what would your main ideas/recommendations be for a follow on project?

Is there anything else you would like to say which we haven't covered or anything you particularly want to stress?

## **Appendix D**

### **Questions for teachers**

#### **Aims of the project**

Can you tell me what you understand the aims of this project to be?

What do you personally feel about those aims?

The brief for this project mentions wellbeing. What do you understand by that?

Do you think a project like this could affect wellbeing, if so in what way?

#### **Planning and preparation**

How do you feel about the planning and preparation of the project?

Is there any way in which the planning could have been improved?

Do you personally feel you were fully prepared?

#### **Impacts on teaching practice**

Do you feel you have learnt anything from the project? If yes, can you give examples?

Has it made a difference to your teaching practice? If so, in what ways?

Are there any ways that this project has impacted negatively on your teaching practice/how you think about your practice? (e.g. loss of confidence)

Have you talked to other teachers about the project/passed on any skills, techniques or approaches?

Has the project filtered into the wider school at all?

What has been the attitudes/understandings of other teachers?

#### **Relationships with practitioners**

What do you feel about the relationships between yourself and the arts practitioners?

Can you give me examples of when the relationship really worked? When not?

Do you feel there were any conflicts/misunderstandings?

Has the project changed your attitude to arts practitioners coming into school at all?

#### **Relationships with pupils**

Has this project changed your relationship with your pupils/individual pupils at all? Either how you see them/how you think they see you? If yes, how?

#### **Impact of the project on pupils**

What has been the impact of the project on pupils?

Whole class benefits or disadvantages? Are there any generalisations you can make?

Are there any particular pupils you have noticed benefitting and in what ways? Particular pupils you feel have not benefitted or have been disadvantaged and why?

Prompts	Pupil's attention and attitudes to learning
	Creativity
	Being content at school
	Relationship with other children/teachers
	Changes in physical awareness/activity
	Attendance
	Social interaction inc gender/working in groups
	Concentration in lessons

Has there been anything you have picked up from parents in terms of positive/negative impacts of the project on their child?

**Practical/logistical arrangements**

What has smoothed or hindered the project in terms of how practical arrangements have gone?

Prompts:

- Issues with flip flops/gym clothing?
- Dance floor/cushions?
- Role of Dance City/Creative Partnerships/communication?
- Need for increased risk assessment?
- Value/role of weekly meetings?
- Extra time administering project?
- Three residencies/timescales?

**General summing up**

What have been the real successes/highlights of the project for you?

What things really haven't worked?

This project was a pilot, what would be your main ideas/recommendations if there was a follow on project?

Is there anything else you would like to say which we haven't covered or anything you particularly want to stress?



## Appendix E

23/11/09

Dear Parent/guardian,

### Target Setting Day Year 3

I am a researcher from Durham University currently attached to Year 3 to research the 'Dance and Learning Inspired' (DALI) project. I would be very grateful for the opportunity to ask you what you think about the project. Your opinions will be really useful in trying to assess what effect the project has had on the children.

I will be in school during Target Setting Day on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November and after you have seen the teachers I will ask if you are willing to chat to me for a few minutes. I would be very interested to know:

*What information you have had about the project;*

*What your child is telling you about the project;*

*Any changes you may have noticed in your child since the project began;*

*Any concerns or worries you may have;*

*Anything else you want to say/ask about the project.*

There is no obligation to talk to me of course and I will understand completely if you can't spare the time. If you would like to talk to me or send me comments at any other time please feel free to get in touch. My contact details are below.

I look forward to meeting some of you on Thursday.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Scott  
Centre for Medical Humanities  
Durham University  
Email: [k.e.scott@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:k.e.scott@ncl.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0191 3348245

## Appendix F Parent Response Summary

Child	First impressions/info	Difference made to child	Other comments
1	No info/last minute	Writing stories, putting more vocab into work, talking more about school, really happy	Would like it to carry on. Loved cocoons, grandpa came in to see. Would like more info
2	Teachers told them about it. Thought it was different, sounded exciting	Not loads of difference, always loved school, bigger words, more vocabulary noticed	Continue but with reservations need more info
3	'Bit apprehensive , didn't understand reason for it' Found out at parent's evening.	Big difference in schoolwork, vocab, activity levels, playing out more, sudden zest, enjoyment of school and attendance, bouncing out of bed.	Would definitely like it to continue. Very positive difference perceived
4	n/a	Childminder says she noticed a big change in her, seems to have suddenly 'switched on' she doesn't stop talking now.	Missed child's parents, childminder told this to teacher.
5	Letter from school, didn't really know much, no concerns had been to DC a couple of times already with school	Very happy, always smiling when comes out of school, wants to take up dance again, coming out with more words, different vocab and always wants to talk about school, talked about maths and movement, doing different dance steps	Please continue
6	Came to info session in summer term, there wasn't many parents there, not unusual. Interesting, different learning through movement and dance, tables and chairs taken out. A little bit concerned about school work suffering, not sure how it was going to work	She was excited about starting this year. Always enjoyed school but confidence grown due to project, was very shy outside immediate family, now she'll talk to anybody. She didn't like sport, used to say she was tired, now more active and walks more. Used to come home from school tired now she isn't. Developed more interest in reading. Sometimes used to be reluctant getting her to school now no trouble getting her there. Talks about school more and all the people.	Definitely continue
7	Saw it on the news! Child was told in class.	Child talks a lot to childminder straight after school now. Always liked school. Initially said 'dance is for girls' so was a bit reluctant but he enjoys it as he knows it's not dance all the time. He likes the socializing more than the work. Not made much difference to him.	More nits due to increased contact.  Shouldn't call it dance
8	Good idea, gets them moving not at desk all day, learn more like that.	She's doing more at home. Repeating things she's done at school, comes out with new things more than last year, more energy always upstairs making stuff. No impact on schoolwork.	No concerns, would like it to continue. A bit more info about what they are doing, maybe on a monthly basis.
9	Not a lot of info, just knew it was about movement. Good idea for kids to express themselves and exercise, more fun at school, learn through play, gives them more energy.	Mixed better with other children, more settled, happier at school.	pleased if they did it for the whole year. Great for parents to come in and get involved, keep it going.
10	Didn't get a letter, don't know much or come to meeting, saw something in the school newsletter.	Enjoying school better than last year, joining in more. Has never done much exercise but now has started getting interested in football, seems to have more energy. Better concentration for schoolwork now.	Would like more information

11	Had letters and was happy about level of information. At first I thought it was weird but child likes it so I'm happy with it.	Always talking about it, more enthusiastic and excited, last year didn't talk about school, seems happier, schoolwork very good, best it's ever been.	
12	Happy with info, came for Bare Toed demo. Initially thought it was very different, great for children more academically challenged. A bit new age arty farty, maybe for one or two days not keen on it for the whole term.	Has had advantages and disadvantages. He has enjoyed it but not necessarily good for learning, he needs more structure.	Would not be happy if it was year 5 or 6
13	At first I thought it was just dance, came in for the cocoons, child was on telly.	She doesn't stop talking about it, very different to last year, totally changed. More confident, now will talk to people outside family. More active. Something has set her off. Behaviour much better, relationship much better. No difference to schoolwork but not worried as no negative impact.	Would like it to continue for the whole year. Also done football coaching and he reckons this has also had huge impact.
14	Initial letter, people coming in to do movement, quite happy anything to get him moving!	Really enjoying it, talking about school more. Lots of problems coming to school last year now no problem. Reading levels improving. A lot more open and outgoing.	Parents making effort to read with him too which is also having impact.
15	Didn't know much about it, not happy had to ring the school, annoyed. Came in for cocoons not much info or anyone to ask.	She's enjoyed it but didn't like clothes 'clown clothes'. She hasn't had any concentration for her writing, never happened before, ever since nursery she was a perfectionist. Hard to be neat with no tables and chairs. Just started getting interested in maths.	Continue but with reservations. Need to feel confident that teachers with deal with slippage in academic work.
16	Letter from school. At first didn't understand it, thought what has dance got to do with learning	Loving it, she's expressing herself at home, being Annie, coming home excited about what she's done. Not happy at first had to settle in too much change all at once. Concentrating more, does exercises at home, gets on better with other children.	Happy for it to continue
17	Can't remember	It's the only reason she talks to me, talking more than last year about what's happened, sometimes it goes on for 3 hours so I don't ask. more active and energetic instead of watching telly constantly. Doesn't like floor, likes to be neat.	
18	Letters, came in to meet teachers, thought kids were fibbing about no tables but if they are enjoying then learning better. Thinks tables are better for posture	Progress, really come on this term in confidence, lacked it previously when she didn't know people.	
19	First heard on news, thought it was a good idea, to learn in different ways	Noticed change, much better behaviour at school, more active dancing instead of play station, style of learning suits him better.	Would be nice to know more, thinks they should make a programme for the telly, nice to see what's going on.
20	Talked to gran, art brings out the best in people	She talks about what she's doing more, she loves it, her dancing is more creative now, she does dance already, now she choreographs herself.	It's fantastic

21	Came to see teachers and heard about it then 'dead exciting ' but husband thought it was a bit weird. Makes learning fun and interesting	Enjoyed it, doesn't talk much about it. Last year often said he didn't want to come to school had problems, not said that this year. More expressive with words, comes out with funny words. More interest in schoolwork, has improved this year. Started making stuff at home hasn't done that before. Happier than last year, more sociable at school but behaviour maybe worse at home, cheekier.	More information.
22	Didn't realise tables and chairs not there but happy with info.	Less resistance coming to school this year, enjoying it more. More writing, drawing at home, doing breakdancing at home, always been active. Less shy, mixing in more. Tells us more about what she's doing at school now, tells us who the dancers are, she's just bounced all of a sudden. Comes out with unusual words. Struggling with maths and project hindering her, needs more one to one. But reading has come on leaps and bounds.	Just needs some attention to learning in maths.